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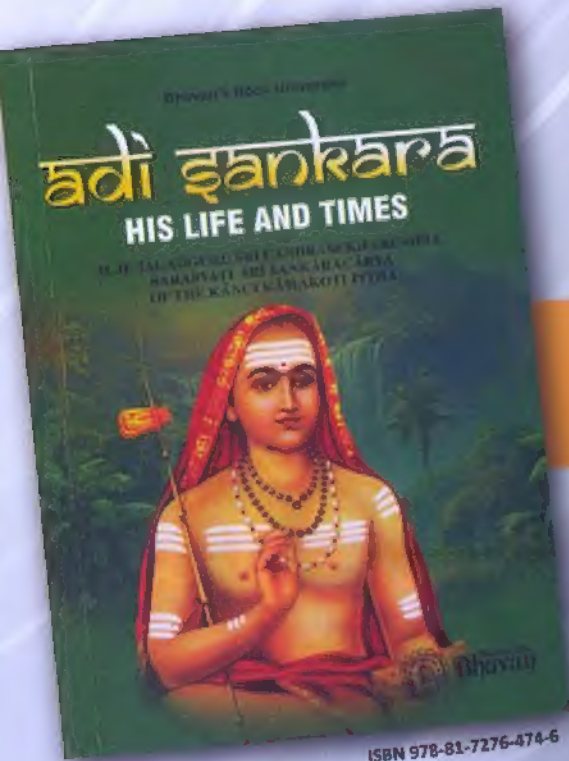
BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

ĀDI ŚAṆKARA

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

H. H. Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvati,
Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāñci Kāmakoṭi Piṭha

Translated into English
by T.M.P. Mahadevan



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Bhavan's Journal

English Fortnightly



KRISHNA

A Study in the Theory of Avataras

Bhagavan Das

KRISHNA

A STUDY IN THE THEORY OF AVATARAS
BHAGAVAN DAS



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आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

aa no bhadraah kratavo yantu vishvatah

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side -Rigveda, I-89-i



SAGE SPEAK



दानेन भूतानि वशीभवन्ति दानेन वैराण्यपि यान्ति नाशम् ।
परोऽपि बन्धुत्वमुपैति दानैर्दानं हि सर्वव्यसनानि हन्ति ॥

A charity can subdue any creature, a charity can eliminate enemies and make them allies. A charity indeed is the cure for all bad things.



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Cover

**Astronaut Sunita Williams returned to Earth
on March 19, 2025 after a prolonged 9-month stay
at the International Space Station**

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FLASH BACK

Culture

Rajaji writes to Collegians

Culture is not music, dancing, painting or other such fine art... Any amount of fine arts, vast quantities of memorised literature may be there, but if there is no sincerity, if there is no compassion and consideration for other people's feelings, if there is no self-restraint, there is no culture...

The words 'culture' and 'art,' along with their grammatical variations, form the double-barrelled names of numerous associations established in recent years in many of our urban centers. This leads to a certain confusion of ideas among the young and the old. It does not matter much what persons of advanced age think of themselves or of culture, but it is very important that young men and women should not mistake what culture is. The big future of India depends on the turn given to the ambition of boys and girls in this generation.



Culture is not music, dancing, painting or other such fine art. Painting, playing on the veena, and the like are accomplishments some of which young men and women should no doubt acquire. They

make life pleasant for themselves as well as for others. They serve a very good and wide purpose in that way; but it is wrong to imagine that if you possess the accomplishments or if you have read much English or Sanskrit literature you are a man of culture, or that if you cannot sing or play on the violin or paint or quote from Shakespeare or Kalidasa, you are not a man of culture. Culture consists of something other than accomplishments in the field of literature or fine arts.

A man of culture understands and shows consideration for the feelings of the person he deals with.

A man who is not truthful cannot be a man of culture. Try and you will find this at once from what other people will think and say of you!

If one wishes to be a man of culture then he must abstain from excessive indulgence in sensuous pleasures. Restraint with regard to every kind of sensuous satisfaction is the very hallmark of culture. An inordinate craving for physical pleasure at once puts a man outside the world of culture.

Cruelty is inconsistent with culture. A compassionate attitude towards man, child, beast, and bird marks out the man of culture.

Unnecessary cruelty is the sign of a 'brute', which is the common name to denote one who is the opposite of a man of culture.

Clean habits are an external quality, but culture is essentially a social virtue and therefore is largely external.

To be a true and good coin, your culture should be no counterfeit. There should be culture in the heart so that cultured behaviour may automatically flow out of it.

An uneducated person can be a man of culture, but more is expected of an educated man in every respect I have referred to, than of those good men who have not had the advantage of education. Any amount of knowledge cannot by itself make a man cultured. Any amount of fine arts, vast quantities of memorised literature, may be there but if there is no sincerity, if there is no compassion and consideration for other people's feelings, if there is no self-restraint, there is no culture.

All the qualities I have mentioned must be acquired by dint of habit. There is no time like youth for the formation of good habits, and no means better than mutual example. ●

[Courtesy: Allagappa College Souvenir, Karaikudi].



Kulapativani

Secondary Education

As early as possible, secondary education should cease to be merely a stepping-stone to a degree and become an end in itself. In addition to technical, vocational or agricultural training, the basic studies at this stage should include such subjects as would enable every student to live and work as a free citizen of democratic India, with a keen sense of her past heritage and future mission.

Among the basic studies should be the study of Hindi; a general knowledge of the history, literature and culture of India; a general familiarity with Indian classical works, either through Hindi or regional languages; the study of the struggle for India's freedom, the present Constitution, and a background knowledge of the national movement—social, moral and religious.



Point to Ponder

Intelligence and Wisdom

Intelligence is about skill, technique and know-how; whereas wisdom is devoted to philosophy, ethics and spiritual cultivation. The former concentrates on methodology; the latter on principle. Intelligence deals primarily with tangible. Material things we see and touch whereas wisdom is related to such intangible subjects as courage, devotion, love, patience and the like.

Intelligence is to the brain as wisdom to the mind; intelligence is to the biology of the body as wisdom to the soul of a person. An intelligent man engages himself in the meteorological study of the sky. A wise man ponders on the wonders of the universe.

Generally, experiments on things by man are in the field of intelligence, while experiences of moral and spiritual dimensions



belong to the realm of wisdom. Intelligence is to be used. Wisdom is to be attained.

An intelligent man may be proud of his intelligence but a wise man is wise enough to be humble. An intelligent man researches for facts, but a wise man searches for truth. There are countless millions of intelligent people in the world but only a handful of wise men. The differences between intelligence and wisdom are subtle but vital, and inability to distinguish the former from the latter may greatly hinder the realisation of a truly good life.

Intelligence is not our end in itself and it is not capable of self-sustenance. Intelligence is

only an instrument to be used by man. It can be used for good purposes, but also for unjust designs. It is neither moral nor immoral but non-moral. It is like a sharp knife which can be used for cutting vegetables and slicing bread, but also for wounding and slaying.

The world of tomorrow is already here, but peace and harmony are still far away and painfully wanting, both within and between nations. The great emphasis on intelligence and material perfection in the modern world proves to be woefully and misleadingly inadequate. Something is missing, badly missing and that something is wisdom....!!!

Prayer, the Food of My Soul

M. K. Gandhi

I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is.

No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance, man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul.

Even if I am killed, I will not give up repeating the names of

Rama and Rahim, which mean to me the same God. With these names on my lips, I will die cheerfully.

Safeguard in Trial

On all occasions of trial He has saved me. I know that the phrase 'God saved me' has a deeper meaning for me today, and still I feel that I have not yet grasped its entire meaning. Only richer experience can help me to a fuller understanding.

But in all my trials—of a spiritual nature, as a lawyer, in conducting institutions, and in politics—I can say that God saved



me. When every hope is gone, 'when helpers fail and comforts flee', I experience that help arrives somehow, from I know not where.

Prayer has been the saving of my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you that I have had my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer.

Now I may tell you that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And the more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it.

I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had

failed to grip me. I could not join them in prayer. They supplicated God, but I could not do so, I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and, until at a late stage in life, I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage I felt that, as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer-starvation...

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace, I tell you, comes from prayer; I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Everyone is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trod by the ancient teachers.

...I have given my personal testimony. Let everyone try and find that, as a result of daily prayer, he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.

God's Response

Never own defeat in a sacred cause and make up your minds henceforth that you will be pure and that you will find a response from God. But God never answers the prayers of the arrogant, nor the prayers of those who bargain with Him...

If you would ask Him to help you, you would go to Him in all your nakedness, approach Him without reservations, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help a fallen being like you. He who has helped millions who have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exceptions whatsoever and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience. I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you.

I have never found Him lacking in response. I have found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest in my ordeals in jails when it was not at all smooth sailing for me. I cannot recall a moment in my life when I had a sense of desertion by God.

Character of Prayer

Supplication, worship and prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else is unreal.

Such worship or prayer is no flight of eloquence; it is no lip-homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart when it is 'emptied of all but love', if we keep all the chords in proper tune, they 'trembling pass in music out of sight'.

Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. I have not the slightest doubt that prayer is an unfailing means of cleansing the heart of passions. But it must be combined with the utmost humility.

It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

We go to the temple to worship not the stone or the metal image, but God who resides in it. The image becomes what man makes of it. It has no power independently of the sanctity with which it is invested by the worshipper. Therefore everyone,

including children, should observe perfect silence at the time of prayer.

Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing the self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour. Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God.

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from doing so. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him, but also from the hearts of others.

Need for Prayer

As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to do without food for a number of days—as Mac Swiney did for over 70 days—but, believing in God, man cannot, should not live a moment without prayer.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit, believe that God is and will help

us unasked. Why, then, is it necessary to recite His name? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realisation of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all sciences. How much more true of the science of all sciences?

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.

I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who had experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer, there is no inward peace.

I agree that, if a man could practise the presence of God all the twenty-four hours, there would be no need for a separate time for prayer. But most people find this impossible. The sordid everyday world is too much with them. For them, the practice of complete withdrawal of the mind from all outward things, even though it might be only for a few minutes every day, will be found to be of infinite use. Silent communion will help them to



experience an undisturbed peace in the midst of turmoil, to curb anger and cultivate patience.

It should be the general rule that prayers must not be delayed for anybody on earth. God's time never stops. From the very beginning, the wheel of His time has gone ceaselessly on. As a matter of fact, there is no beginning for Him or His time... How can anyone afford to miss

the time of offering prayers to Him whose watch never stops?

In the first *shloka* of the Ishopanishad that is repeated every day at the beginning of the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The principle condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion. ●

SWEET THOUGHT

Sri Krishna Sweets

PRODUCERS OF PURE GHEE SWEETS

"Success doesn't consist in never making mistakes! But in never making the same one a second time!!"

- George Bernard Shaw



Sunita Williams is Back to Earth

Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore set off to spend just eight days at the Space Station. However, the trip lasted for nine months!!

On March 19, 2025 the two NASA Astronauts who had been in orbit since June 2024 Sunita and Butch splashed down in the waters off Florida Panhandle, concluding a saga that had captivated the world for the past nine months.

Originally intended to last about just eight days, technical issues with the spacecraft's propulsion system prevented it from making the return trip. The Starliner was deemed unsafe and ruled out as the astronaut's ride home, leaving

Williams and Wilmore stranded on the ISS (International Space Station) while awaiting a replacement spacecraft.

Meanwhile the two became key members of the ISS crew, carrying out experiments, fixing equipment and conducting spacewalks.

Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore had travelled nearly 1,21,347,500 miles, and orbited the Earth 4,576 times. Wilmore spent a total of 31 hours conducting space walks during his career and Sunita Williams 62 hours, a record for a female astronaut.

Their unwavering determination, in the face of the unknown, will forever inspire millions. ●

Mahakumbh: India's Spiritual Soft Power on the Global Stage

Prof. N. D. Mathur & Ms. Yukti Gupta

In a world where cultural diplomacy and soft power are increasingly vital to international influence, India's Maha Kumbh Mela stands out as a beacon of ancient tradition and modern diplomacy. The most recent edition of the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj has not only reaffirmed India's deep-rooted cultural legacy but also demonstrated how spiritual gatherings can serve as powerful tools in projecting a nation's soft power globally, similar to how Hajj in Saudi Arabia, Burning Man in USA and World Youth Day at the Catholic Church have been attracting a considerable number of tourists globally.

Spanning over 4,000 hectares along the revered banks of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the legendary Saraswati, the Maha Kumbh witnessed devotees, scholars, saints, artists, and tourists from all walks of life come together, creating a vibrant mosaic that mirrored India's age-old philosophy of inclusiveness. At its core, the Maha Kumbh is a celebration of India's spiritual identity. The festival's origins trace back to mythological narratives, particularly the ancient tale of the churning of the cosmic ocean, during which drops of divine nectar are said to have fallen at specific locations. Over centuries, this belief evolved into a pilgrimage

that promises purification and liberation, but beyond its religious dimensions, the Maha Kumbh also served as a dynamic cultural fair. Art installations, street murals and vibrant performances brought to life the storied traditions of India. Initiatives such as 'Paint My City' turned public spaces into sprawling galleries that narrated the tale of Bharat's civilisation in the panorama of global civilisation. These artistic endeavours not only celebrated India's rich cultural past but also invited global participation, further enhancing the country's image as a leader in cultural diplomacy.

The Global Stage: A Showcase of India's Soft Power

In today's interconnected world, soft power has emerged as a critical

component of international relations. Unlike hard power, which relies on military or economic might, soft power is derived from a country's cultural appeal, political values and social influence. The Maha Kumbh, with its universal themes of spirituality, unity and ecological reverence, was a shining example of how India leverages its cultural heritage to build bridges across nations. International delegations, including dignitaries, cultural ambassadors, and media representatives from over 70 countries, were drawn to the Maha Kumbh. Their participation not only elevated the event's global profile but also fostered a deeper understanding of India's cultural ethos. As these visitors experienced

first-hand a blend of ancient wisdom and modern innovation, they carried back a narrative of a nation that remains rooted in tradition while dynamically engaging with contemporary global issues. This strategic engagement with international audiences has far-reaching implications for global diplomacy. Prominent voices in global discourse, such as renowned intellectuals and cultural commentators, lauded the Maha Kumbh as a living embodiment of the country's 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' philosophy—the idea that the world is one family. Such endorsements serve to amplify India's image as a peaceful, inclusive and forward-thinking nation.

The sacred rivers that form the lifeblood of the Maha Kumbh are not just venues for ritualistic cleansing; they are symbols of India's commitment to global environmental sustainability. The festival's organisers, in collaboration with government agencies, have implemented extensive measures to safeguard the health of these waters. Initiatives such as the Namami Gange project and Swachh Bharat Mission have been integral in maintaining the ecological sanctity

of the rivers, ensuring that they continue to serve as sources of spiritual and cultural rejuvenation. This dual focus on environmental conservation and cultural heritage highlights a critical aspect of India's soft power—the ability to champion sustainability while celebrating tradition. The global community increasingly looks to nations that can demonstrate ecological responsibility, and India's efforts in maintaining clean and vibrant waterways resonate strongly on the international stage. By aligning its spiritual practices with environmental stewardship, India sends a powerful message about the interdependence of nature and culture—a narrative that is both timely and universally appealing.

The Maha Kumbh also plays a pivotal role in fostering regional co-operation in South Asia. The festival, with its deep historical and cultural roots, transcends national boundaries and invites participation from neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This inclusiveness promotes a shared sense of identity and heritage among the nations of the region, offering a counterbalance to



political tensions and external rivalries. By positioning the Maha Kumbh as a platform for regional dialogue and cultural exchange, India not only enhances its own standing as a cultural hub but also contributes to a broader vision of South Asian unity. This collaborative spirit, rooted in shared traditions and mutual respect, is a cornerstone of India's foreign policy. It underscores the idea that cultural diplomacy can be a unifying force in a diverse and often divided region.

The success of the Maha Kumbh is a reminder that India's cultural and spiritual legacy is not confined to the past; it is a living, evolving force that continues to shape the nation's identity and its role on the global stage. Initiatives such as immersive virtual reality experiences, global art collaborations, and expanded international delegations could serve to amplify its impact, attracting an even broader audience and reinforcing India's soft power narrative. Moreover, the Maha Kumbh provides an opportunity for India to share its traditional knowledge systems—such as yoga, Ayurveda, and meditation—with a global audience

that is increasingly interested in holistic well-being. This not only boosts cultural diplomacy but also opens up significant economic opportunities, positioning India as a leader in both cultural and economic arenas.

The Maha Kumbh is far more than a religious gathering; it is a grand tapestry that weaves together India's spiritual heritage, cultural vibrancy, and modern innovations. As the largest human congregation on the planet, it stands as a powerful testament to the nation's enduring ability to inspire and unite people from all corners of the globe. Through its intricate blend of ancient traditions, cutting-edge technology, and ecological consciousness, the Maha Kumbh projects an image of India that is both timeless and forward-looking. In a time when global narratives



are increasingly shaped by cultural and soft power, the Maha Kumbh offers a compelling vision of what it means to be Indian—a nation that cherishes its past and boldly embraces the future, while preserving the present cultural diversity with unity. It is a celebration of unity, diversity, and the indomitable spirit of a people who have long understood that true strength lies in the harmonious co-existence of tradition and innovation. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has noted, India's true strength lies in its culture, its traditions and its values. The Maha Kumbh encapsulates these ideals, inviting the world to witness not

just an event, but a living, breathing celebration of what it means to be part of a global family united by shared human values. By continuing to invest in this unique cultural phenomenon, India is poised to further enhance its role as a global leader in cultural diplomacy, proving that its spiritual soft power is, indeed, one of its most formidable assets. In the grand narrative of India's journey, the Maha Kumbh stands as a luminous chapter—a chapter that tells the story of a nation whose spirit transcends borders, inspiring a world that is ever in need of hope, unity, and the timeless wisdom of its ancient traditions. ●

War and Peace

The Inevitable Cycle of Life

Bhaskar N. Mehta

Since the dawn of human history, the problem of force and coercion has remained unresolved. Conflicts and wars have been enduring features of human existence. Historical records spanning the last two and a half millennia show that wars have plagued every civilisation, regardless of its governing system—be it autocratic or democratic. Ironically, the 'democratic' twentieth century and the early twenty-first century have proven to be the bloodiest and most violent periods in history. From the Mahabharata in the East and the Trojan War in the West to the

current conflicts in Israel-Palestine and Russia-Ukraine, the cycle of death and destruction persists unabated.

Wounded by war and haunted by the spectre of modern weapons of mass destruction, humanity is desperately seeking an escape from this death trap. Tragically, every attempt to find peace seems to lead to yet another war. Even during periods of 'peace', the preparation for war continues uninterrupted. The arms race shows no sign of slowing, with international arms dealers thriving as they supply deadly weapons to nations locked in or

on the brink of a conflict. Thousands of nuclear and other lethal weapons capable of obliterating the world in moments are stockpiled in countries like the United States, Russia, and others. Bomb factories operate at full capacity, as evidenced by instances like the Pantex plant in Texas, which had to expand its workforce and production shifts to meet the demand. This grim scenario remains unchanged today.

Meanwhile, millions of people—many of them children—die of starvation each year. Countless others, though they survive, endure lives of misery and deprivation, which often feel worse than death. A large portion

of the global population lacks access to professional healthcare, yet nations spend over four times as much on military armaments as on healthcare. Nearly half of humanity lacks access to safe drinking water, while a significant number of scientists in developing countries are devoted to weapons research rather than life-saving innovations.

War is an organised effort to kill, yet it has often been glorified as a natural and necessary aspect of national life. Human intelligence and reason, instead of fostering peace, have been used to justify war. Tragically, even some of history's greatest thinkers and philosophers have endorsed



war, often portraying it as a means to achieve higher goals. Socrates, for instance, regarded war as a patriotic duty and participated in several battles himself. Friedrich Nietzsche described war as a 'remedy' for nations on the brink of decline, famously asserting, "Man shall be trained for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior." Oswald Spengler considered war the 'eternal form of higher human existence'.

On the other hand, voices like Bertrand Russell's, opposing war and its devastating consequences, often go unheard amid the chaos of reckless human actions. While Socrates and Russell both had nuanced views on war—Socrates advocating patriotism and virtue, and Russell supporting a form of pacifism that allowed war only as a last resort—their influence has done little to curb humanity's propensity for violence.

Only Mahatma Gandhi stood unwavering in his rejection of war and violence. He advocated for absolute non-violence and self-sacrifice, stating, "If blood be shed, let it be our blood... Cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing." Gandhi's ideals, though noble, found little

resonance in a world marred by the Second World War and countless subsequent conflicts.

Religion, a powerful influence in human life, also reflects humanity's ambivalence towards violence. While all major religions extol non-violence as a virtue, they often permit the use of force under certain conditions. Even Buddha, when asked by a warrior about the morality of war, acknowledged that protecting one's home and justice might justify war after exhausting all peaceful means. Similarly, Lord Krishna urged Arjuna to fight in the Mahabharata, emphasising duty and justice over hesitation and fear.

Transforming humanity's collective mindset is a slow process that spans centuries, if not millennia. However, there are faint signs of change. The glorification of war is gradually giving way to regret and reluctance. Humanity's growing conscience offers a glimmer of hope: while wars persist, they are increasingly viewed as tragic necessities rather than noble endeavours.

This shift in perception is a hopeful sign of humanity's future. ●

Saving Water: Need of the Hour

Laxman Gorlakatte

Summer is here. The one thing which bothers many in summer is scarcity of water. The drying up of rivers and reservoirs, over-exploitation of ground water, rapid urbanisation and poor management of available sources of water contribute to the worsening water crisis. Some regions face severe shortage of drinking water, causing dehydration and other health issues. Animals, too, suffer from shortage of water. While the government and other agencies are tackling the problem of water scarcity, people also have to

shoulder the responsibility of avoiding wastage by using water judiciously.

How can we avoid wastage of water? Some areas where wastage can be avoided are.

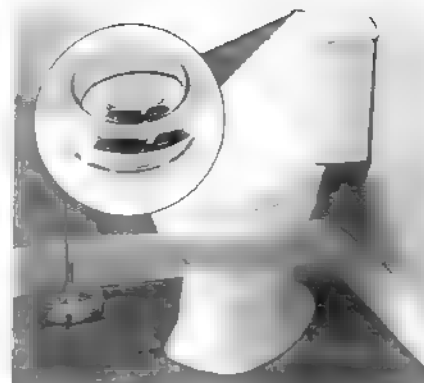
1. While bathing, long showers or repeatedly splashing oneself with water can be avoided.
2. Keeping the wash basin tap open continuously while brushing one's teeth or while shaving, unmindful of water wastage, should be avoided. It should become a habit to open the tap only when required.
3. Usage of Western type of toilets

with flush water tanks is increasing day by day.

Emptying the flush water tank fully every time we use the toilet is not necessary. At least two to three times in a day, it is enough to flush out only about half of the water in the flush tank after using the toilet. A slight press and lifting up of the flush tank button so that only about half of the water in the tank is discharged, is all that is needed. Though it may appear strange or trivial, the tremendous impact of this practice will surprise us. Assuming that only about one crore people follow this practice at least twice in a day, it will add up to two crore instances of partial usage of flush tank water. Each instance of discharging only about 5 litres of water (half of 10 litres, the total amount in a flush tank) would result in the saving of

nearly 10 crore litres of water. This water is enough to cater to the needs of about 10 lakh people! (According to the World Health Organization, 100 litres per head per day is the minimum quantity of water required.) If this suggestion is made into a campaign (*abhiyan*) that is endorsed by VIPs and celebrities then it would go a long way in saving water.

4. Flush tanks with two press buttons are available. The small button is for the partial discharge of water and the other one is for emptying the flush tank fully. One should use the appropriate button to save water. Production of flush tanks with dual flush buttons should be made mandatory.
5. Many times, drinking water served in glasses is not fully used. Leftover water is disposed off. This is observed in restaurants and functions. Even mineral



Dual Flush Toilet Tank Button

water bottles with partially used water are thrown away.

Placing empty glasses alongside a kettle full of water so that only the required

quantity of water is served, is a good idea to avoid wastage.

6. Water used for washing vegetables, fruits and other ingredients in the kitchen can be used to water the kitchen garden wherever feasible.
7. Water recycling, fixing the leaking taps, rain water harvesting, and such other measures should be used to conserve water.

Water is life-sustaining and hence needs to be saved in every possible way. Each one of us has a role to play in this.

Pilgrimage to Freedom

Indian Constitutional Document Vol. I & II

- K. M. Munshi

Kulapati Munshi was in India's public life for six decades as lawyer, freedom-fighter, Constitution-maker, Minister and Governor. He was also a scholar and writer of no mean repute. In these two volumes, he dons the mantle of a historian and records the process of the transfer of power into Indian hands by the British and how Indians gave unto themselves a democratic, republican constitution. The volumes have an authentic touch as Munshi was not only a witness to these historic events but an agent of the change itself. Here are two indispensable documents to students of modern Indian history.



Vol. I ISBN 9788172764692 Pages 640
Vol. II ISBN 9788172764968 Pages 591

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Climate-Smart Infrastructure

Dr. A. Jagan Mohan Reddy

Natural calamities such as the devastating landslides in Wayanad, Kerala, serve as stark reminders of the escalating consequences of environmental degradation. These events underscore the urgent need to shift our focus towards building resilience and developing climate-smart infrastructure. With global warming, climate change, rising atmospheric CO₂ levels, environmental degradation and water scarcity becoming more pressing, the time is ripe for proactive measures.

Addressing the Challenges Global Warming and Climate Change:

To combat global warming and climate change, it is crucial to integrate sustainable practices across all sectors. This includes transitioning to renewable energy sources, enhancing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through strict regulations and incentives for green technology.

Atmospheric CO₂ Concentration:

The rising concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere is a significant contributor to global warming. Adopting carbon capture and storage

technologies, reforestation, and promoting carbon-neutral initiatives can help mitigate this issue. Encouraging industries to adopt sustainable practices is equally vital.

Environmental Degradation:

Environmental degradation, often driven by deforestation, urban sprawl, and unsustainable agricultural practices, requires a multifaceted approach. Implementing policies that protect natural habitats, promoting sustainable land use, and restoring degraded ecosystems are critical steps in this direction.

Climate-Smart Infrastructure:

Developing infrastructure that is resilient to climate impacts is essential. This includes designing buildings and cities that can withstand extreme weather events, using materials that reduce environmental impact, and incorporating green spaces to manage urban heat islands and enhance biodiversity.

Water Scarcity:

Addressing water scarcity involves improving water management practices, investing in technologies that enhance water efficiency, and promoting the use of alternative water sources, such as rainwater harvesting and desalination. Protecting and restoring natural water bodies is also crucial to ensuring long-term water availability.

As we confront the challenges of global warming, climate change, environmental degradation, and water scarcity, building resilience through climate-smart infrastructure becomes not just a necessity but a moral imperative. By adopting sustainable practices, investing in green technologies, and prioritising the protection of our environment, we can create a future where both humanity and nature thrive in harmony. The time to act is now, and with collective effort, we can pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable world. ●

SWEET THOUGHT

Sri Krishna Sweets

PRODUCERS OF PURE GHEE SWEETS

Life isn't about finding
yourself !

Life is about creating yourself !!

- George Bernard Shaw

Origami to the Rescue!

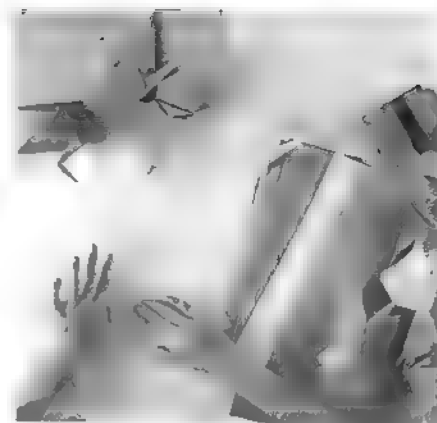
Saurabh Turakhia

James Davies grew up in an orphanage. 'Lives Matter' orphanage was his home since he was five years old. His raw emotions were not easy to handle. He would throw tantrums every now and then. The pain of separation from his parents further intensified whenever he would see a happy family. James needed some balance, some anchor to withstand the many storms he would face every now and then. Deepa Shah, a psychologist who would visit the orphanage once a fortnight, had many ideas. Origami was one of them.

From the time he turned five, for one whole year, James struggled a lot with his emotions. His mind remained closed. He was his gloomy self, most of the time. He would often look at the sky, as if communicating with God, asking him, "Why me? Why only me?" He would get no answers. Deepa's hour-long lectures were able to pique his interest. He would ask questions, explore paper as if it were clay and he, the creator, who was able to design something unique. He appreciated how Deepa asked everyone to build or design something they missed in their real

life. The first thing that everyone made was parents, as all of them missed the presence of their parents. They would cut out a circle that would represent the head, a pair of rectangles for hands and slightly longer rectangles for feet. They would then imagine or recall their parents' features and create the same on the paper figures. The front portion would comprise of a colourful T-shirt or a kurta decorated with pretty designs.

James was too emotionally hurt and while trying the exercise, would often break down. Deepa was concerned about him. She guided him and advised him to always look at the positive aspects of life. She gave examples of people who were challenged visually and yet made a mark. Deepa comforted James, wiping away his tears. The two began having heart-to-heart conversations over a cup of tea. Deepa urged everyone at 'Lives Matter' to always give the benefit of doubt to everyone even if they have caused hurt in any way. Shyamal Das, the manager of the orphanage, was happy with the positive difference Deepa was able to create in so many lives. Out of curiosity, James would often ask Shyamal about his parents, where they lived, etc. Shyamal would



change the topic and discuss something more interesting. Ira Joshi was quite different from James. She was able to reconcile with what had happened quite easily, while James continued to be emotional about the topic. Both of them loved to play carom.

Over a period of time, Ira and James bonded a lot over carom. It was a study of sorts in human behaviour for Deepa.

Deeply satisfied with the experiment, Deepa conducted it for other sessions with other audiences and it worked in different ways, for every such session. No life is 'complete'. There is a void in every person's life. Children seem to be happy for they are overjoyed with what they have, and live in the moment. Also, we have a chance to create the missing elements of our life—through origami!

A Tale of Two Siblings

Dr Swati Jindal Garg

What appeared to be a small feud between a brother and a sister has turned into a full blown, high-profile legal battle between the former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his sister YS Sharmila, leading to the former Chief Minister writing to the National Company Law Tribunal, or NCLT as it is called, and seeking to nullify her 'illegal' transfer of shares in Saraswati Power and Industries Private Limited to herself and their mother YS Vijaya Lakshmi.

Reddy also wrote to his sister accusing her of deceit and further apprising her that he had no intention of honouring a Memorandum of Understanding that they had entered into. After the contents of his letter became known publicly, her written response to the same has also gone public.

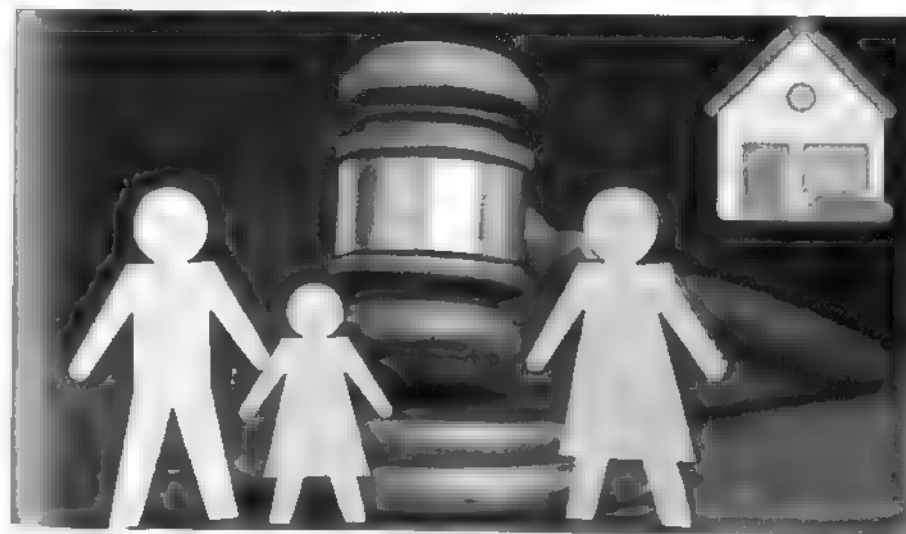
The enmity that Sharmila started with Reddy is now going public with Reddy claiming that there was no longer any affection between the siblings, while the sister claims that the relations have

gone sour due to Reddy not distributing assets equally between the four grandchildren of YS Rajasekhara Reddy (their father), as desired by him. In fact, such is the state of affairs now that Reddy, along with his wife, has petitioned the NCLT to reinstate the two as shareholders with the same equity share holding as before the transfers were made by Sharmila in her and their mother's name. The duo also alleged that the share transfers to Sharmila and Vijayamma (YS Vijaya Lakshmi) were carried out through a Board resolution in July 2024 without following the proper legal procedure. The petition further stated that Reddy had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with his sister Sharmila in

August 2019 to transfer certain properties and shares "out of love and affection", but this transfer was never executed, as Mr Reddy had changed his mind owing to the rivalry between the siblings. In the light of these developments, Reddy claimed that the share transfers made by Sharmila were in violation of the MoU arrived at between them and were the result of a "deceitful deviance of law", hence being "invalid, illegal, void, and unlawful".

The NCLT issued notice to the accused parties and stated that it would hear the matter in due course.

"Out of the sheer love and affection I always bore towards you as my sister, I had also expressed my intention that, unrelated to any consideration and purely out of love and affection, I



intended to effect the transfer of certain properties to you at a future point of time. This was in addition to the amount of approximately Rs. 200 crores already given to you directly or through our mother over the last decade or so. This too was given by me out of my sheer love and affection for you," Reddy wrote in a letter addressed to his sister. He also pointed out that along with the ancestral property inherited from their father YS Rajasekhara Reddy, he had also built his own businesses over a period of time, to which the sister retaliated by saying that he had not acted in accordance of the will of their late father that directed to distribute the property equally among all four of his grandchildren.

"Our father was unequivocal in his instructions that all four of his grandchildren are to share equally in all assets that existed during his lifetime, whether they pertain to Bharathi Cements, Sakshi, or any other venture initiated prior to his passing," Sharmila said. She also claimed that the transfer of shares was part of the property sharing 'settlement'. "Since you had the upper hand, you did bulldoze your way and we agreed to a settlement as stated in the MoU. Since you are

my elder brother and in the interest of resolving family disputes, I agreed to give up my equal share. Thus, under the MoU, only a few properties were assigned to me," she alleged. "You have now chosen to file cases against your own mother and deprive your own sister and her children of properties to which they are entitled under the MoU. I am appalled at the extent to which you have strayed from the path of our noble father," Sharmila wrote in her public letter whilst also criticising Reddy's intervention in her political career, claiming that it was 'absurd' of him to suggest that she sign a clause that binds her from speaking against him or their cousin Avinash through public platforms.

Reddy, on the other hand, claimed in his letter that despite his affection, Sharmila made several false statements publicly which caused personal disrepute. "In view of this and other actions undertaken by you, it makes me wonder why there should be any love and affection or fondness towards you," he wrote.

It seems that the family saga is unravelling like an endless ball of yarn as speaking to reporters in Vijayawada, a teary-eyed Sharmila said, "God is watching, and justice

will prevail." In a three-page letter to YSR supporters, she also alleged that "all family assets Jagan claims as his own are family assets" and that she has not received a single asset legally due to her.

The beginning of this feud can be traced back to the year 2021 when, owing to a fallout between the two, YS Sharmila had gone ahead and floated her own party, namely the YSR Telangana Party. The party, however, merged with the Congress just before the 2024 elections with Sharmila being crowned the Chief of the Andhra Pradesh Congress. The feud came to light before the public eye when Sharmila started attacking her own brother who was the Chief Minister of the state at the time. She said that her brother's outlook changed significantly upon becoming Chief Minister in 2019, when he suggested that the family should 'part ways'. "Within a month of taking office, he proposed that we separate, insisting that separation was inevitable. He proposed a 60-40 split, which my mother also found unfair," recounted Sharmila.

She also claims that she has been holding on to the MoU for more than five years without receiving any asset from the same and that

she has refrained from disclosing it to the media or courts only out of the respect that she carries for the YSR family's honour. She has further claimed that the reason for these letters to finally be presented before the public is also attributable to Jagan Reddy whose actions have caused immense distress to their mother whilst also affecting the morale of the YSR supporters.

The YSRCP spokesperson and former MLA Rachamalla Sivaprasad Reddy, on the other hand, has criticised Sharmila Reddy and accused her of conspiring against their chief Jagan Reddy's political career and aligning with their rivals Chandrababu Naidu and TDP (Telugu Desam Party) MLA Paritala Sunitha in the pursuit of power. He also said that Reddy retains the love and affection that he had for his sister which is the exact reason he offered her a share even in his self-acquired assets. As per the spokesperson, Reddy's appeal to the court was only due to certain unavoidable circumstances and not to stake his claim on the family assets.

The matter, it seems, is only unfolding like the peeling of an onion—it might bring with it more tears and anguish. Only time will tell how the siblings sort their saga! ●

Adversity Tests Our True Mettle

Anuradha Rajan

Every individual has his own trials and tribulations which take shape and prove to be the stepping stones of his life by helping him define his character. Such a trial could be a battle—real or imagined—or one that is purely figurative, right within the mind. But what is of ultimate importance is the manner in which success is obtained in quelling our inner or outer obstacle and the process of coming out triumphant. As someone commented, 'Wars begin in the mind but ultimately they end in our minds too...'

In this context, recall the Pandava warrior Arjuna's characteristic quandary on the battleground of Kurukshetra as he viewed his relatives and next-of-kin aligned against him. All of a sudden, he is assailed by a wave of self-consuming doubt, as he debates the necessity of this war, perhaps the way many of us wonder aloud at similar dilemmas in our life. Arjuna was fortunate in being guided by the Lord Himself in the guise of his charioteer, and thus ensues the Bhagavad Gita. Many of us likewise, are equally fortuitous in having our

kith and kin or even friends or mentors advise us. While we may not be blessed by the preceptors of the Gita or the Ten Commandments, the Quran or the Guru Granth Sahib, what does set apart each of us in that adversity is the fact that we learn, like Arjuna, to conquer that Goliath within.

Ultimately, the Goliath within can vary from the insidious Ego that wreaks havoc in the calm waters of our 'Inner Soul', to Envy, that 'Green-eyed Monster', or worse, Vengeance that makes a home for itself within our hearts, eating away at our core. If not the Goliath or the Giant that challenges us, it could be something far more formidable like a disaster that snatches away a loved one or a catastrophic failure in a job or worse, ill-health which shakes us to our core.

Like the diminutive David from Biblical lore, this complacent Goliath is astoundingly and suddenly dethroned as faith in our Self and the Divine reigns supreme, and helps unseat him. Finally, courage—that most sterling of all virtues—and an almost blind faith in the Lord and

implicit surrender to Him is what helps us in this battle as in every other.

Who isn't familiar with the ways of the Outer World, wherein adversity dogs us at every step, where our mettle is tested at every step of the way before we don the cloak of experience! The ways of the Inner World are equally known to many, mysterious though it may be all too often, with all its demands and attempts at swaying us from the straight and narrow path. Yet we commit the same errors in essaying our role in this world of ours. The saving grace lies in our being guided in our efforts by our seers, gurus and mentors. It is their presence that redeems us in our otherwise trifling life, often distinguished with little else but material pursuits.

But as that all too challenging obstacle looms ahead of us, the best within us is harnessed and aroused from a state of somnolence, and the braveheart within us tackles head-on every vicissitude. Truly, every individual has that spark of something special, that Genius perhaps, or that Valiant Spirit, which comes



to the fore in a trying situation only. In ordinary situations, we may remain placid in the face of usual or unusual circumstances but when life tests us, suddenly we leap up and face our misfortune with enormous fortitude. In times of peace, even countries rest easy, but when war comes calling, all the resources are summoned up and countless souls sacrifice their lives for their country without batting an eyelid...

When Christ fasted for forty days alone in the wilderness, time and again temptation confronted him and he overcame it; many a time he was faced with Satan and he conquered that beast incarnate. Here, it was Christ's belief in the Heavenly Father and his faith in the Right Way that helped him. Likewise, when the Buddha entered the final stage of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, Mara, the monster, or the personification of the unwholesome, negative impulse in man, sent three beautiful women to tempt him. But Buddha remained tranquil in the face of this tempest and gained Nirvana eventually.

The Sikh Guru Nanak, too, was tested repeatedly by the Mughals, and even by his own kith and kin who refused to accept his way and his line of thinking of One God

('Ek Onkar'). Yet eventually, it was his precepts that paved the way for Sikhism. And who isn't familiar with the monsters that tried to challenge Krishna from the time he was born? Yet, every time, he emerged triumphant, proving that Right alone is the victor in the battle between Good and Bad.

Every battle within and without is a test of character. The famed king Alexander suffered countless trials in the course of his conquest, and likewise, King Bruce, as he battled the English and the Crusaders. Closer home, the illustrious King Porus is known for his much acclaimed battle against Alexander. In a more real and physical sense, their battles were fought for one reason or the other, be it for their land or for their cause, yet what stands out is their perseverance, determination and true grit, which is as appreciable as that of great religious figures like Prophet Mohammed, Guru Nanak, Christ or Krishna.

People will come and go and prophets will emerge and attain sublimation in this universe of ours, yet what will remain etched in our collective consciousness is their sacrifice, and their message of love, hope, faith and courage. ●

The Reclining Lord and His Royal Servitors

Sunitha Madhavan

South India's architectural and devotional splendour hark back to an enchanted past. Pilgrims and tourists alike have marveled at the momentous monuments and towering temple edifices. One such is the Sri Anantha Padmanabhaswamy temple at Thiruvananthapuram. The uniqueness of this shrine is that the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum where the Murti is reclining on the bed of Adishesha in the milk ocean, has three sets of massive doors. The God in Ananthasayana is visible through these doors. The Deity is in divine slumber, 'Yoga Nidhra',

and can be viewed in three parts.

The transliteration of verses from Andal's Tiruppavai with meaning will explain the triple joy:

Through the first doorway we see the serene countenance of the Lord. Verse 1—

*"Kaar mein-ch-chengan, kadhir
madhiyam pol mukathan,
Narayanane....."*

"He who is pretty in black colour,
He who has beautiful red eyes,
He who has a face like the
well-lit moon.

He who is our Lord Narayanan."

From the middle threshold, we view His sturdy shoulder, chest and navel.

Verse 4—

"Paazhi am tholudai
Padmanabhan."

Arising out of His navel is a lotus stalk, holding Creator Brahma on its flower. Hence the name Sri Padmanabha for the Supreme god, in whose chest Lakshmi is ever present.

Darshan of the Almighty's feet is from the third door set.

Verses 4—

"Oongi ulagalanda uthaman,"

&2—

"Parkadalul, Paiya thuyinra
praman adi."

The holy feet of God who grew big and measured the world, now resting in mid-milk ocean.

Among all Azhvars, the prolific Nammalvar alone has sung *pasurams* exclusively on Anantha Padmanabhaswamy. The poet-saint's hymns in Tiruvaimozhi from *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* exude devotion. His fervency can be felt in *Yezham Pathu* (tenth centum), sixth Tiruvaimozhi, second song]:

"Paa maru moovulagum padaitha
padmanabha! O!

Paa maru moovulagum alandha
padmapadha! O!"

Thamaraikanna! O! thaniyaen
thani allaa! O!

Thamarai kaiya! O! unnai enru kol
chayirvadhuve?" —[7-6-2]

"Oh, Padmanabha, who created the worlds three, vast and varied,

Oh, Lord with lotus feet that spanned worlds three,

Oh, Lotus-eyed, You are the Master unique of this soul lonely,

Oh, Lord with lotus hands, when do I attain Your feet comely?"

Azhvar implores Padmanabhaswamy to embrace with His lotus hands His devotee who had surrendered at His lotus feet. In another *pasuram* in Tiruvaimozhi, [10-2-1,] Azhvar assures us that chanting of Lord's name, Kesava, will drive out even the emissaries of Yama. We are exhorted to visit 'ananthapura-nagar', situated amidst luxurious lush paddy fields, where the Lord resplendent reclines on the poisonous serpent.

Perhaps, the three pointed focus on the Supreme being in refined relaxation is to suggest the three *gunas*: *thamas*, *rajas* and *sathva*. The Omnipotent is at peace, apparently oblivious (but really not), to the turbulence around causing distress for devas by demons. The Saviour can be aroused through genuine efforts when devas approach Him for help. His broad shoulder is for shielding them and with Sri in His chest, all wealth lost can be regained. Even the lost creation during Mahapralaya, the huge

deluge can be recreated. From His navel, sprouts a lotus on which Lord Brahma is seated. Best of all is the complete surrender at Purushothaman's feet, caressed by Lakshmi. That for sure will prop Him up to protect devotees in crisis! Vishnu lying on the serpent couch is depicted with his right arm stretched out reaching to a Sivalinga. The diligent saguna Paramathma in trance is ever in contemplation of the nirguna Paramesvara. The three pronged glimpse of the Lord will suffice to bestow all auspiciousness by the Trinity.

Padmanabhaswamy and Padmanabhadasas of Travancore kingdom, are inseverable. Maharaja Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma (1706-1758) was a descendant of both Chera and Chola dynasties. He established the kingdom of Travancore in 1729. The valorous king dared to defy the powerful multinational, the Dutch East India Company. He won over them in the Battle of Colachel (1741) and subdued the warlords of Kerala who had signed contracts for spice trade with the Dutch.

De Lannoy, naval officer of the Dutch East India Company was





De Lannoy's surrender to the Maharaja at the Battle of Colachel. Standing with folded hand is Ramayyan Dalava, Army Commander.

captured in the battle. He became so pleased with the treatment meted out to war prisoners that he had a change of heart. Eventually, earning the trust of the Maharaja, De Lannoy joined the Travancore military and became the army commander. He served loyally for 37 years and never returned to Holland. The military strategist was instrumental in the building of the Nedumkotta, a line of fortifications in the Northern borders of Travancore and allied Cochin State. Known as the Travancore Lines, Nedumkotta, during the period of King Karthika Varma (nephew and successor to King Marthanda Varma),

protected the Kingdom against marauders.

The above incident will suffice to assert that Bhakti is not merely performing rituals; but in the process, imbibing the attributes of the god we adore. King Marthanda Varma should be a glowing example. A sprinkling of the attributes credited to Anantha Padmanabhaswamy, in the Ashtothra namavali may be presented:

'*Srithajanapriyaya*' - compassionate towards those who seek shelter
'*Brahmanaya*'—one who possesses bhraminical qualifications like self-control, truthfulness, contentment, etc..

'*Dharma parayanaya*'—holding justice/righteousness above all

To Him I perform my obeisance, '*Namaha*', is all the prayer. No doubt the ardent Marthanda Varma exemplified such qualities which impressed even his adversaries.

Emerging victorious over the vastly superior Dutch artillery, the virtuous Raja, a staunch devotee of Sri Padmanabha renovated the temple. The architecture is a fusion of Kerala and Dravidian styles. He felt obliged, brimming with gratitude to dedicate the entire kingdom to the royal tutelary deity, Padmanabhaswamy. The visionary monarch Marthanda Varma, in 1750 declared that he and his descendants would serve the kingdom as vassals and called themselves as Padmanabhadasas. The commitment was sacrosanct. The Kingship rested with the resting Lord Padmanabhaswamy! The Guardian God promptly thwarted threats to the realm, maintaining its sovereignty. Hyder Ali (1767) and Tipu Sultan's (1789) attempts to covet the domain never succeeded. The fortification built by De Lannoy defended Travancore from ominous perils.

The vast treasures to the Padmanabha temple came through thriving commerce along the Malabar coast. The trade winds brought in abundant wealth to the shores. The present 18 foot Murthi is made up of 12,008 holy Salagram stones from the banks of river Gandaki, Nepal in 1739. The capital of Travancore was previously Padmanabhapuram near Kanyakumari. It was later shifted to Thiruvananthapuram. During the reign of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal (1813-46), mellifluous music rained. They were the divine, exquisite Kirthanas composed on the Lord by the Maharaja who used mostly the mudra 'Padmanabha' for his compositions besides others which are also suggestive of His sacred name.

The temple idol and the ideal lying behind it are both most holy. The Lord in divine slumber awakened the social consciousness. During the reign of Maharaja Chithira Thirunal, the Divine dispensation that entire humanity had a right to seek the blessings of the Supreme Being, materialised. The doors of Divine Bliss opened for all in 1936. Gandhiji entered the temple for the first time. That all mankind had a right to enter the God's premises

and obtain His grace was established when the Royal Decree was promulgated by the State of Travancore. The epoch making event had a tidal wave impact on the Madras Presidency. The ripple effect of social cohesion, in course of time spread and strengthened national solidarity. Sarojini Naidu remarked: "What has happened is of an epic character." Mahadev Desai, personal secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, took the clue and gave the title, '*Epic of Travancore*' (1937) for his book.

Mahadev Desai and Mahatma Gandhi witnessed the spontaneity

of the rejoicings over the Proclamation by the Avarnas, the untouchables and the Savarnas, the upper castes, who felt the visible embrace of brotherhood. The darshan of the deity inspired faith in the fraternal spirit. Desai heard and wrote in his book of Gandhiji's acceptance: "It would have been a stupid act of foolishness on my part if I had not visited Travancore, if only to see this temple and to see the affectionate way in which the Harijans were taken into the temple." The Nambudiri priest who had earlier fiercely opposed the opening of the temple roads at

Vaikom to Harijans in 1924, came now specifically to see Gandhi and express his satisfaction at what had now happened.

Gandhiji however, was cautious and explicitly stated: "The Proclamation should have no political significance, as it has none. I regard it as the performance of a purely religious duty of the State. And it should be so taken and so treated by all Hindus of the State. To give it any other colour will be to destroy its great spiritual purpose and effect." He hoped the example of Travancore would be followed by other States. He considered it to be the privilege and duty of a Hindu prince to propound religious codes which are not inconsistent with the fundamental principles of Hinduism as derived from the Vedas and which are demanded by the spirit of times. He considered this must be true of all progressive and living religions. He appreciated the Brahmanical spirit of princes (as in Travancore) who would take from the revenues the honest minimum necessary to support them as a commission for their labours on behalf of the ryots, and hold their revenues in trust for the ryots. They would not have private

property as they possess today and feel independent of their subjects and indifferent to their needs.

It remains to be seen whether we will ever reach the ideal state in the management of our ancient temples which are storehouses of our social, political and cultural history. Endowments need to be properly administered and utilised for the purposes for which they were created. Renovation work must be done with care and sensitivity to preserve the inscriptions that mirror our pristine past. May Padmanabhaswamy give us wisdom to uphold our rich cultural heritage and prestige!

So the take away from the Thiruvananthapuram Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple is:

"Awake, awake, the night is past, ye sleeping ones!

Arise, arise, lift up your heads, ye dreaming ones!

Your ancient glory shall return,
And your high star of destiny
more brightly burn".

—C.P. Andrews

[Gandhiji's close aide who identified with the cause of India's independence and accompanied the Mahatma to the Second Round Table Conference in England] ●



With Mahatma Gandhi after the historic Temp

Photos from the book, "CP", by his contemporaries.

Emotional Intelligence: The Key to a Harmonious Life

Prema Raghavan

In a world where success often feels synonymous with speed and efficiency, Emotional Quotient (EQ) is the bridge to a balanced and fulfilling life. Unlike IQ, which measures cognitive ability, EQ embodies empathy, resilience, and meaningful connections. It transforms the way we relate to ourselves and others, creating a foundation for success—both professional and personal—and holistic well-being. As Robert Cooper noted, “Emotional Intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy,

information, connection, and influence.”

The Science behind Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI develops from the integration of two hemispheres of the brain:

1. The Emotional Brain (Right Hemisphere): Responsible for emotions, intuition and creativity.
2. The Rational Brain (Left Hemisphere): Governs logic, reason and analysis.

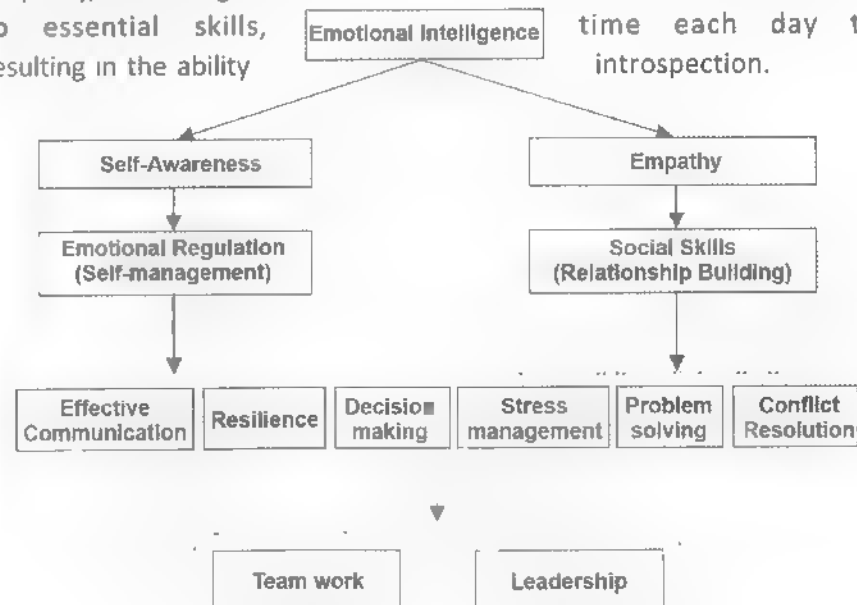
These parts communicate through the corpus callosum, a bundle of nerve fibres connecting them. This connection helps us recognise emotions, regulate them,

understand the feelings of others, and make balanced decisions. A harmonious ‘conversation’ between the two hemispheres enables high EQ, integrating thoughts and emotions to guide interactions and choices.

Here’s a simple yet effective analogy: think of the emotional brain as the ‘heart’ and the rational brain as the ‘head’. Emotional intelligence is when they work together in harmony.

Visualising EQ: The Key Components

Here’s a diagram that illustrates the key components of EQ, starting from the roots of self-awareness and empathy, branching out to essential skills, resulting in the ability



to be a very good team player and leader.

Core Components of EQ and Strategies to Develop It

EQ building is a lifelong journey and requires intentional, conscious effort and practice. Here are the core components of EQ and techniques to develop them.

1. Self-Awareness

- ◆ Recognise and understand your own emotions, as well as how one’s behaviour impacts others and how others influence your emotional state.

◆ Practices:

- ▼ Practise mindfulness and meditation. Dedicate at least 10 minutes of your time each day to introspection.

▼ Keep a journal to track your emotions, reflect on them and identify patterns.

▼ Seek constructive feedback from trusted friends or mentors.

2. Emotional Regulation (Self-Management)

◆ Manage emotions in various situations.

◆ Techniques:

▼ Engage in physical activity (such as walking or yoga) to manage stress.

▼ Practise deep breathing exercises and prioritise timely sleep.

▼ Develop healthy coping mechanisms such as creative expressions or talking to a friend.

3. Empathy

◆ Learn to sense, accept and understand others' emotions without letting them consume you.

◆ Practices:

▼ Practise active listening by maintaining eye contact and asking open-ended questions.

▼ Cultivate compassion by putting yourself in others' shoes.

4. Social Skills (Relationship-building)

◆ Build meaningful connections and positive relationships.

◆ This includes conflict resolution and teamwork.

Skills resulting from EQ

1. Effective Communication:

Expressing thoughts and feelings with clarity and respect. Assertiveness training can help you express your needs clearly.

2. Resilience:

The ability to bounce back from setbacks or adversity.

3. Stress Management:

Managing stress in a healthy, productive way.

4. Decision-Making:

Balancing logic with emotions to make wise choices.

5. Problem-solving:

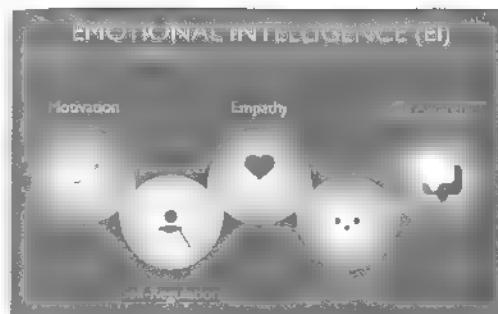
Developing a proactive and solution-oriented approach to tackling problems. Looking at challenges as opportunities for growth.

6. Conflict resolution:

Quickly identifying, pre-empting (if possible) and resolving disputes constructively using strategies such as seeking common ground.

High EQ in Action: Stories of Inspiration from India

In India, there are many who embody a high EQ, using it to create positive change and inspire others.



Here are a few powerful examples:

Harakhchand Savla: Driven by empathy, Savla saw the struggles of cancer patients near Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai. He transformed his empathy into action, founding the Jeevan Jyot Trust to offer free meals, accommodation, and counselling to these patients. His EQ allowed him to understand and address the emotional needs of others, impacting thousands.

Mumbai's Dabbawalas: These lunch delivery personnel, despite their limited formal education, display remarkable EQ, understanding the dietary needs and timing expectations of customers. Their dedication, adaptability and teamwork allow them to deliver two lakh meals a day across Mumbai, setting an example in reliability and empathy.

Kailash Satyarthi: An activist

against child labour, Satyarthi's empathy drives his mission to protect exploited children. His EQ has enabled him to connect with world leaders, advocate for policy changes, and build a global movement for child rights.

Ratan Tata: This doyen of Indian industry fostered a culture of empathy in the organisations that he led. The survivors of the 26/11 terror attack on Mumbai's Taj Hotel have amply recounted how the staff of the Taj Hotel helped them get through the ordeal, risking their own lives. Ratan Tata's philanthropy is legendary, and his self-awareness made him realise the importance of succession planning.

Justice VR Krishna Iyer: This revered Supreme Court judge introduced prison reforms and advocated for human rights, thus displaying his sense of compassion and humanity. He also showed emotional regulation by remaining calm under pressure.

Arunima Sinha: With her resilience, this mountaineer overcame physical disability. With exemplary emotional regulation, she managed her fear and anxiety and ended up motivating and

inspiring others through her achievements.

EQ on the World Stage

Emotional intelligence is equally apparent in figures like Nelson Mandela, whose EQ allowed him to inspire reconciliation and forgiveness in South Africa, and the Dalai Lama, whose compassion, empathy and humility have made him a global figure for peace.

Examples of People with High IQ & Low EQ

We often see high IQ individuals who struggle to live a wholesome, balanced life because of a deficient EQ.

- ◆ The revolutionary physicist Albert Einstein was blessed with unparalleled intellectual brilliance but struggled with relationships. He went through two divorces and was known to exhibit introverted and sometimes abrasive personality traits.
- ◆ The trailblazing scientist Marie Curie who pioneered radioactivity research faced personal struggles, including depression and grief. She had intense but unstable relationships, including a scandalous affair. She struggled

with fame, feeling isolated and overwhelmed.

- ◆ Renowned Indian scientist and Bharat Ratna recipient, Dr C N R Rao is known for his blunt criticism of colleagues and limited patience.
- ◆ In the field of politics, we see a number of charismatic and intelligent yet mercurial politicians who rake up needless controversies with their polarizing statements and impulsive, immature decisions.

Emotional intelligence is essential for a balanced, harmonious life. By developing EQ, we build stronger relationships, a resilient mindset, and the ability to navigate life's challenges with calmness and a sense of understanding. As the Bhagavad Gita reminds us, "Remain equipoised in success and failure, gain and loss, pleasure and pain." Cultivating a high EQ helps us live by these wise words, achieving balance, empathy and peace in our personal and professional lives.

In this journey of growth, emotional intelligence is the predictor of a life well-lived, empowering us to not just succeed but to thrive with purpose and fulfilment. ●

Plight of Citizens as Population Grows

Dr. Radhanath Behera

Our population has grown at an alarming rate, from about 340 million during the advent of national independence to about 1,420 million at present. The burden of their upkeep and general welfare since then lies not upon any foreign masters but on ourselves. We have been slowly evolving as a welfare state that provides basic amenities to all the citizens of India in spite of the rapid growth in population and paucity of resources.

It was a small consolation when the then Prime Minister of India,

Pandit Nehru, asserted that our country was not overpopulated by Western standards. Because at that time, India was importing tons of foodgrains to feed its burgeoning population.

The territorial space of every country remains static unless its government is greedy enough to grab others' land or annex their landed property forcibly. But population increases everywhere unchecked, may be due to ignorance or the illusory thinking that our country and its resources are enough to sustain twice the current

population. It may be recalled, in passing, that the Indonesian President, Sukarno, was reputed to have ignored the warning that his island-nation was thickly populated and needed caution to stabilise or decrease its population on a priority basis. He glossed over it, with catastrophic consequences for the country.

Leaders, especially those of developing countries, were slow to understand the threat of population growth. Most thinkers, particularly from the stream of economics, through their studies and reports, alerted us to the looming scarcity of food alongside the unbridled rise in population. Historically, it was

Thomas Malthus, an English demographer, clergyman and economist, who first raised the alarm about growth in population and its immediate impact on the lifestyle and survival of many citizens belonging to several countries.

Although it was Condorcet who signalled the adverse effects of population growth, it was Malthus who pinpointed the reasons for the rise in population and suggested solutions, often impracticable. He attributed population growth to three conditions, namely moral restraint, sin and poverty (caused by low wages). As an economist,

he sided with industrialists and appreciated the low wages they paid to the labouring class. He hoped that poverty in a family would automatically curtail the birth of more children, whereas the ground reality is contrary to this; poverty only breeds more children.

Being a clergyman, Malthus prescribed restraint for all married couples and it was undoubtedly a natural way to defeat the population rise. But most of the citizens are normal men and women who give way to sensual pleasures, and that is the root cause of the rise of the birth rate. His next prescription was to avoid accumulating 'sin', which was an artificial process contrary to the law of nature, namely the use of scientific methods of checking birth rate through the use of devices like condoms. Since we live in the world of science, religion, with its basis in moral restraint, occupies a backseat and most people believe that there is no 'sin' in adopting alternative means in this regard.

We are witnessing a world that is sharply divided into two blocs of countries: the developed and the underdeveloped. The reasons

for their development are obvious—the spread of education, adoption of agricultural industries, and decent living standards without the burden of excessive population growth. The surplus from land, industries, and other resources generate a life of abundance, maintaining human dignity while making their countries more prosperous.

Economic theory also plays an important role in stabilising population growth. The law of diminishing returns elaborates that once a patch of land reaches its optimum yield in crops, its productivity cannot be further enhanced by adding more fertilizers or labour. The same law is applicable to demographic problems: if our natural resources remain the same and our optimum yield is reached, we should not expect agricultural output to rise in order to meet the challenges caused by the growth in population. In such a situation, nature involuntarily plays its role in preventing the burden of overpopulation. This is evident in floods, famines, pestilence, the spread of diseases and starvation, leading to death on a high scale.



Malthus, through a mathematical law, showed that food supply grows at a slow pace (in arithmetic progression), while population rises rapidly (in geometrical progression).

When mothers in the prenatal stage are deprived of proper nourishment and infants are not properly fed, the latter are unlikely to survive even infancy. And if at all they survive, their childhood and adult lives will face the constant threat of premature death for want of nutrition. This again points to a negative way of solving food crises as well as arresting the growth rate. We resort to war on flimsy grounds, hoping to cause mass casualties among fighting citizens and expect to settle scores with our adversary at a quicker pace. But war is never an instrument of settling disputes; peace—obtained through discussions, debates, negotiations,

and respecting others' right to co-exist—leads to victories.

In these times of boundary disputes, a dominating national spirit and a rise in nationalistic emotions, a huge army cannot always be sent to the frontlines. Soldiers may be sacrificed with no compunction, just because civilians are available for military training and can then be sent to the borders as replacements. To overcome this stigma, nations have to grow from within, respecting one another's sovereignty and the right to exist amicably. Nuclear war is a threat to the entire world, and in case of its eventuality, all of us (combatants and non-combatants alike) face an equal danger, and hence a large army or a booming population cannot promise victory. Thus, a big population is a big challenge—it is a major obstacle to leading a life of decency, dignity and prosperity.

SWEET THOUGHT

Sri Krishna Sweets
PRODUCERS OF PURE GHEE SWEETS

Success is simple - "Do what's right, the right way, at the right time".

- Arnold H. Glasgow

Book Review

Mapping the Mahabharata and Ramayana

Reviewed by Subba Rao

A UN official, global traveller, and devoted chronicler of India's epic narratives, Mazumdar dedicated his life to preserving the rich tapestry of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. His remarkable journey, spanning nearly a century, was ultimately a profound mission of cultural preservation, transforming ancient stories into accessible knowledge for generations to come.

Subash Mazumdar (1919-2019) was a distinguished scholar and passionate connoisseur of India's most profound epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Born in the early 20th century, he spent his formative years immersed in the rich cultural landscape of India. Driven by an insatiable quest for knowledge, Mazumdar pursued his post-graduate studies abroad,

broadening his intellectual horizons beyond his homeland's boundaries.

For nearly three and a half decades, he served as a dedicated United Nations official, traversing the globe and gaining a truly international perspective. In 1984, after years of global service, Mazumdar returned to India, choosing Pune as his spiritual and intellectual sanctuary.

—what he reverentially called his *tapobhumi* (land of penance and scholarly pursuit).

The final 35 years of his remarkable life were devoted to a profound scholarly mission. He meticulously crafted two extraordinary reference works that would become lasting contributions to Indian epic literature. In 1988, he published *'Who is Who in the Mahabharata'*, a comprehensive biographical compendium that illuminated the complex characters of this ancient epic. His second masterpiece, *'Who is Who in the Ramayana'*, was posthumously published in 2024, completing his lifelong dedication to preserving and understanding these timeless narratives.

Subash Mazumdar's profound scholarship and deep love for the Indian epics were rooted in the rich cultural soil of his childhood. The timeless narratives of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata had seeped into his heart during his formative years in India, creating an indelible connection that would shape his entire life's work. This passion was a treasure he lovingly shared with his wife, Anjani—a partnership that transcended geographical boundaries.

Despite living and working abroad for many years, the Mazumdars remained steadfast in their commitment to preserving their cultural heritage. Their three daughters, raised in foreign lands, became living testaments to the enduring power of cultural transmission. Each night, instead of conventional bedtime stories, Subash and Anjani would weave intricate tales from the ancient epics, transforming their home into a living classroom of Indian wisdom and values.

This deliberate approach to parenting was a delicate art of cultural preservation. Through these nightly storytelling sessions, the Mazumdars did more than entertain their children—they carefully passed the torch of tradition, much like the ancient storytellers who maintained the



epic's legacy through generations. Their daughters absorbed not just stories, but the profound philosophical and moral teachings embedded in these narratives.

In this way, Subash and Anjani Mazumdar became modern-day carriers of an age-old tradition of oral storytelling, ensuring that the rich tapestry of Indian cultural wisdom would continue to live through their children, bridging continents and generations.

Upon returning to India, Subash Mazumdar found his true scholarly calling: preserving the vast and intricate world of Indian epics for future generations. With the meticulous precision of a seasoned researcher and the passion of a cultural custodian, he embarked on a systematic and exhaustive study of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. His methodology was painstaking—he carefully extracted, cross-referenced, and organised countless details about characters, relationships and narratives.

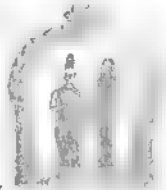
Each note was crafted with scholarly rigour, meticulously arranged in alphabetical order, and cross-checked multiple times to ensure absolute accuracy. This

labour of love was not merely an academic exercise, but a profound act of cultural preservation. When his manuscript was ready, he approached Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a premier institution dedicated to Indian scholarly and cultural research, which recognised the immense value of his work.

In 1988, *'Who is Who in the Mahabharata'* was published, quickly establishing itself as an indispensable reference work. The book's popularity was evident in its multiple reprints, testament to its comprehensive and accessible approach. Its companion volume, *'Who is Who in the Ramayana'*, emerged posthumously in 2024, completing Mazumdar's monumental project of epic documentation.

These works stand as a bridge between scholarly depth and public accessibility, offering insights for both academic researchers and curious readers. They represent more than mere reference books—they are living documents that ensure that the rich, complex narratives of India's greatest epics continue to resonate with contemporary readers, preserving a millennia-old cultural legacy.

वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलम् । वेदो नित्यमधीयताम् । वेदाः वयं नः शरणं प्रपन्नाः । वेदा ये नः परं धनम् ।



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For posterity under ancient traditional Gurukul System**

The Raja Veda Kavya Patasala, Kumbakonam in Tamilnadu was established in 1542 AD for the spread of Vedas and Shastras on the southern banks of sacred river Cauvery by the illustrious statesman- Administrator SAINT ADVAITHA VIDHYACHARYA MAHARAJA SAHEEB BHAGWAN SRI GOVINDA DEEKSHIDAR who was the chief minister to the three successive Nayak rulers of Tanjore. This is the only Patasala in Tamilnadu, which has been functioning without interruption for the past 482 years, where all the three Vedas viz. RIG, YAJUR (SHUKLA, KRISHNA) and SAMA are taught with a time tested ancient syllabus under one roof to young students who are admitted between 8-12 years. At present 145 students undergo training for a period ranging from 7 to 12 years and they are given free boarding, lodging, clothing, medication etc. 16 Adhyapakas impart knowledge to them.

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To overcome the growing expenses of our Patasala, donations are accepted under the following schemes. Kindly mention your mobile number, postal address, either PAN or AADHAR number while sending the donations. Donations are exempted under 80 G in IT.

Name of the Scheme	Donation (Part Expenses)	Corpus Fund
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For Rice and Da	Rs 3000/-	Rs. 40,000/-
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Kamala Chandrakant

Modern India's First Woman Scriptwriter
Rests Her Pen!

Maharishikaa Preeti



February 9, 2025. My mother, Kamala Chandrakant, returns to our home in Goa after a yatra to the Kumbh Mela. She is 84 and in good health. She has lunch and settles in for her nap. A slight sore throat troubles her, and my student, Dnyaneshwar, offers her a lozenge.

"Don't swallow it; let it dissolve in your mouth," he says.

"Yes," she replies.

That is the last word she utters. And how fitting it is—that word! A single syllable that defines the way she has lived her life. No challenge too great, no task too demanding, and no hurdle too high! Always yes! And yes!

**Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan & Amar Chitra
Katha**

The year is 1961. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's College of Journalism opens its doors for the first time. Walking through its hallways is a proud young woman of striking beauty, unaware that she will one day carve her name into history. Briefly serving as editor for Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's publications, she will become India's first great woman scriptwriter—the creative genius and driving force behind the world-renowned illustrated classics, *Amar Chitra Katha*. A storyteller par excellence, she would go on to ignite the imaginations of millions of children worldwide, bringing to life the history, myths and legends of India.

At the Bhavan's College of Journalism, Kamala Iyer meets my father, M. A. Chandrakant, the dashing sports and war photographer with *The Hindu* and later, *Time Life*. He has been asked by a friend to photograph the college play in which she plays a lead role. A brief courtship



follows. They marry. They have three children: Preeti, Sailesh and Vedavyasa.

But her life is not a fairytale. The extraordinary personal challenges she faces will inspire her interpretations of the characters, especially the female ones, which she writes about.

Marriage catapults her into struggles she had never been prepared for. Her arduous day begins at 4:00 a.m., long before Bombay stirs. She cooks, packs lunches, and prepares three young children for school, before boarding a double-decker bus from Worli to the *India Book House* office in town, her arms heavy with reference books—the Mahabharata, the Srimad Bhagavatam and the Shiva Purana—borrowed from the Asiatic Library the evening before, assisted by her good friend, the librarian Shyamala Kutty.

Decades Ahead of Her Time

At the office, she is fierce, uncompromising and passionately creative, her bright black eyes flashing in chronic self-defence as she stakes her claim in the male-dominated world of publishing in the 1970s.

She returns home late, weary from battle—against deadlines, financial challenges and the terrible migraines. But there's no time for rest. Bromides must be checked, lettering revisited, scripts handwritten into dummies, deadlines met. The night stretches on—midnight, 1:00 a.m.—until exhaustion claims her.

At home, we children hear about those presiding over the Grand Yagnya that is *Amar Chitra Katha*. H.G. Mirchandani, the *Yajmana* or host, Anant Pai the *Brahma Ritvik* who supervises the entire process, Subbarao, the all-round creative *Adhvaryu Ritvik*, Nira Benegal, her quiet presence lending refinement to the proceedings, and Luis the ingenious *Udgatri Ritvik*.

Our mother Kamala Chandrakant is the *Hotri*, the one who recites the Rig Vedic hymns and invokes the Gods. And our small, simple flat is an extension of her office, with mother and

children breathing, eating, and sleeping *Amar Chitra Katha*.

We children are her proofreaders, illustration checkers, and test readers, tiptoeing gingerly around the bromides spread out on the floor like black-and-white islands. There are wonderful works by the artists Pratap Mullick, Dilip Kadam and Yusuf Lien whose ethereal depictions of Mirabai's devotion to Krishna bring me to tears.

I suggest a better turn of phrase here, an idiom there. My brother Sailesh's sharp eye catches the misdrawn arrowheads on which Bheeshma lies, their points turned downward instead of piercing his back. Veda Vyasa fires off questions that fuel her imagination.

And with each passing week and year, an exponentially increasing number of eager readers across the world awaits the next *Amar Chitra Katha*.

**Championing Women in
Her Stories**

Kamala Chandrakant is a meticulous researcher and a prolific writer, and as Associate Editor, the English-language guardian of *Amar Chitra Katha*. Again, ahead of her time, her skill at crafting immersive reading

experiences makes her a pioneer of what will later be known as the 'Graphic Novel Style'.

Her creative battles with the editor are legendary. She duels him for the rightful place of women in these stories—for Draupadi and Savitri, for Sita and Mirabai, for Shakuntala and Rani Lakshmibai— not as passive decorative figures standing in the shadow of men, but as women of great force and strength, willpower and wisdom.

She is relentless. Unshakable. Resolute. And Anant Pai, though he argues and resists, invariably relents. He senses that her vision for *Amar Chitra Katha* will forge the bridge between a rapidly modernising India and its glorious past.

In a letter to her in 1999 he writes:

"For me, Amar Chitra Katha was a dream. You helped to bring it to reality."

Anant Pai will receive many well deserved accolades during his lifetime. But Kamala Chandrakant will receive none. Not a single award, nor a moment of public recognition for her unparalleled and enduring contribution to the dissemination of Indian culture worldwide.

Not once does she complain. In the world she grew up in, this is simply the norm.

An Icon, A Legend

One of the most poignant memories I have of my mother is a short conversation we have when I am around seven years old. A voracious reader, I have come across a piece that makes me ask her where God is. She answers:

"Preeti, God is not only one being. God is that which is in that tree and in this table, in the sky, in the sea, in the air around us. God is what we call Brahman. And don't believe anyone if they tell you otherwise."

Intense about everything, an iconic storyteller, a fierce champion of women's rights, a conscientious mother, Kamala Chandrakant may have left this world, but she leaves behind the legacy of the immortal stories she penned.

Stories of mighty goddesses and gods, of brave heroines and heroes, of powerful queens and kings. She has left for future generations unforgettable tales of life and love, of war and heroism. Stories that keep alive the noble spirit and eternal dharma of our great civilisation.

Padma Shri Winner Sally Holkar

Sally Holkar was at home in Maheshwar when she heard that she had been awarded the Padma Shri this year. The 82-year old America-born Stanford graduate was awarded for championing the revival of the Maheshwari art of weaving. Sally Holkar married Richard Holkar, descendant of Maharani Ahilyabai and son of the last maharaja of Indore, in 1967.

Her early years in India were spent at a palace in Indore, but the Holkars moved to Ahilya Fort in Maheshwar after privy purses were abolished.

She co-founded REHWA Society after a chance encounter with a weaver in 1978. The Holkars met the weaver during a walk. The man

was carrying a fine Maheshwari sari and spoke about the plight of the weavers. He asked for their help in reviving the craft and set the Holkars on a journey to reviving Maheshwar art. Rehwa Society started in 1978 with a grant of Rs 79,000 from the Central Welfare Board.

Sally Holkar took up the weavers' cause and dedicated her life to reviving Maheshwari handlooms with 12 looms. Sally Holkar then went on to start Women Weave (2003) and Gudi Mudi (2008) to provide sustainable employment to rural weavers, 90 per cent of whom are women. Gudi Mudi trains women in spinning and weaving locally grown cotton and



gives employment to women from non-weaving families who are widows, separated, physically challenged or belong to other marginalised categories.

The Handloom School was started in 2015 to train the younger generation of the weaving community across the country. Currently, the handlooms of Maheshwar provide employment to 5,000 artisans. It also runs a crèche, a school up to standard eight and provides annual education stipend for children.

The saris, *dupattas*, stoles and fabrics made by these non-profits are sold through exhibitions in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh, etc.

Exploring India All by Herself

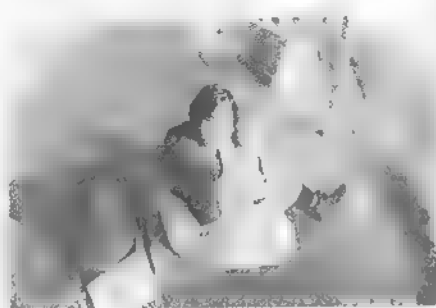
Saraswati Iyer, a courageous young woman, quit her job two years ago and set out to explore India with just two saris, a tent, and a power bank, without spending money.

Saraswati's approach to travel is both minimalist and resourceful. She covers long distances on foot and hitch-hikes when possible. For food, she offers her labour in exchange for meals, embodying the spirit of barter. When it comes to accommodation, she seeks shelter

Sally herself loves the sari and wore the Maheshwari sari regularly for years. For someone who grew up in Dallas, Texas, she has lived most of her life in rural India and loves it.

The Maheshwari craft tradition is now being carried forward by her son Yashwant Rao Holkar III who is married to Nyrika Holkar, executive director, Godrej & Boyce, who will eventually head the Godrej Enterprises Group.

After spending five decades in India and dedicating 46 years to reviving a traditional craft, Sally Holkar has done yeomen service—and her biggest cheerleaders are rural women whose lives have changed with every weft and every warp.



in temples, *dharamshalas* and *ashrams*, places known for their hospitality towards travellers. Her camping tent also provides a safe haven when needed.

Through Instagram, 'Safe Ladki', and YouTube channel, 'Travel with Iyer', Saraswati shares her interesting experiences. She aims to inspire other women to embrace solo travel, demonstrating that adventure does not require money—just the courage to begin. Her content is a blend of travel tales, safety tips and motivational messages, all aimed at encouraging women to step out of their comfort zones.

By meticulously planning her routes and leveraging her skills, she has travelled all over India. Safety is a paramount concern for solo

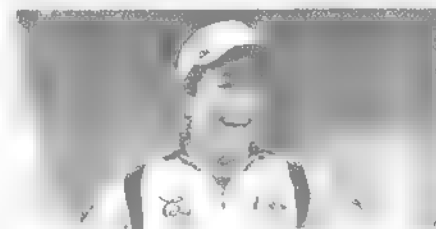
travellers, especially women. Saraswati solves this by choosing her camping spots carefully, often opting for temple grounds or secluded natural settings. She also emphasises the importance of trusting one's instincts and being aware of one's surroundings. Her experiences highlight that challenges can be navigated with caution and common sense.

She has encountered diverse cultures, tasted various cuisines, and formed bonds with people from different walks of life, all of which have enriched her understanding of India.

All-rounder Cricketer, Lisa Sthalekar

Indian-born Australian Lisa Sthalekar, a flamboyant all-rounder, was a hard-hitting batsman and bowled off spin. Former captain of the Australian women's national cricket team, she is now a cricket commentator, having retired from cricket in 2013.

When she was born, her Indian parents abandoned her near a



Pune orphanage. Bitten by insects, she was about to die when a miracle happened. The orphanage manager who was out on a morning walk, spotted her and took care of her. She was named 'Laila'. An American couple adopted her and named her Lisa. They migrated to Australia.

Young 'Liz' played cricket with boys in the street. Her parents encouraged her and she became the first woman cricketer to score 1000 runs and take 100 wickets. She played for Australia—187 matches across formats, scored 4093 runs and took 229 wickets.

She was named best all-rounder of women's cricket.

She played for New South Wales and scored her maiden Test hundred against England in 2003. In February 2007, Sthalekar won the Women's International

Cricketer of the Year for Australia, edging out Karen Rolton, the captain, by one vote. And she was shortlisted for the ICC Women's Player of the Year in 2007, which was won in its first year, by Rolton.

Mini Jungle in Bangalore

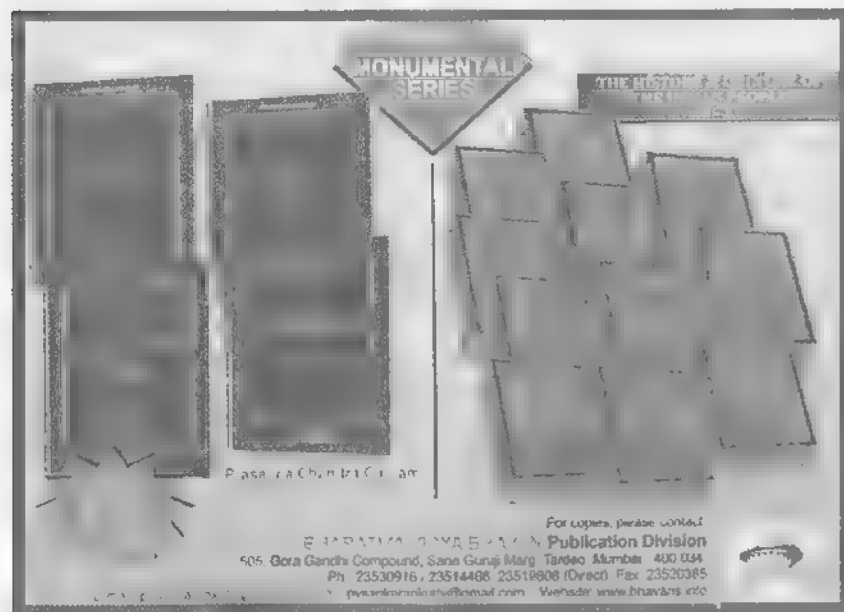
Sumesh and Meethu Nayak have created a mini jungle in their 1,500 sq. ft. home in Bangalore — a haven for 2,000 and more plants, 45 and more bird species, and 30 and more butterfly species!

With zero chemicals and 100 per cent solar power, their lush retreat is a testament to sustainable



living. From mangoes to dragon fruit, they grow it all.

(Compiled by Dr. Veena Adige)



NANDANA

Spectacles

Advait Shrivastav

Amit started wearing spectacles at the tender age of two. The high lens power indicated that his eyes had been weak since birth. The elders at home took every step to ensure that his eyes did not weaken further.

There was a black and white television in the drawing room. Amit had a habit of standing right in front of it when it was switched on. Perhaps he thought that the people on the television screen were actually present there. He would keep gazing at the screen despite being too young to understand the audio and video. Amit's mother noticed his habit and told him to watch TV from a distance. But this instruction did not bring the desired result. Sincere parents always work for the good of their children. Amit's father did the same. The television was soon sold to prevent the imminent harm to Amit's eyes.

Amit turned seven years old. It was the spring of 2007. His father was passionate about cricket and was listening to the radio commentary of a World Cup match. Amit was in the same room and got attracted by the audio advertisement that was repeated after the end of every over. He wondered what exactly his father was listening to and why the same thing was being repeated after every five minutes.

Amit's father took him to the bus stop the next morning and they waited for the school bus, which was running late that day. Amit got



the chance to ask his father what he was listening to the previous day. His father told him that there was a sport known as 'cricket' and that he had been listening to the commentary of a cricket match. Amit's curiosity was satisfied and he conveyed his desire to learn cricket to his father. The passionate cricket lover patted Amit's back and assured him that he would be taught cricket during the coming summer holidays.

As his father promised, Amit's father taught the rules and techniques of cricket to Amit during the vacation. He also kept updating Amit about the history and the current happenings of cricket. Amit's shyness and introversion had hitherto prevented him from making any friends with whom he could play. His father would play cricket with him on Saturdays and Sundays.

Amit had started listening to the radio commentary of cricket matches with enthusiasm. He would return from school with great excitement on match days since most matches began in the afternoon. If a cricket match were scheduled to take place on a holiday, Amit would spend the entire time waiting impatiently from morning. Rain delays during

a match would make him miserable and he would pray for the rain to stop. The scorecard of every match he listened to, was written by him in his diary. Amit would produce his best handwriting to write down the performance of every batter and bowler along with the player's name. He would note down the runs scored by a batter on every ball he faced and add the numbers. An example of his meticulous work went like this:

Virender Sehwag: 4 + 0 + 1 + 4 + 6 + W = 15

caught Ponting bowled Lee

Amit turned eight. The changing times changed his personality. He became friends with five to six boys in his colony. They played cricket together. All boys except Amit had a television set in their homes. This fact was known to everyone in his group. Owing to this, Amit was at times even considered inferior. One day, the boys started talking about the recently concluded ODI match between India and South Africa.

One of them said: "Sachin again got out in the 90s!"

"He came down the pitch to attack the spinner and got stumped. He would have made a hundred if he had played safe for some more balls," Amit added.

"Wow! You do not have a television at your home but still you accurately described the dismissal."

"I listen to the radio commentary with rapt attention," Amit responded.

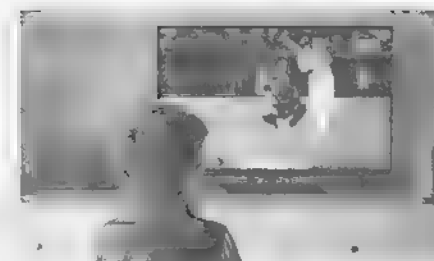
"You seem to live in the 1970s! Sunil Gavaskar must be your favourite cricketer?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" All except Amit laughed their hearts out.

This was not the first insult faced by Amit owing to the absence of a television at home. And it was also not the last one. Once again, Amit's personality changed due to the regular humiliation he faced. He left that group and preferred spending time at home to going out to play. His behaviour displayed symptoms of depression.

Amit turned fourteen. It was December 2013. He was in class nine and the winter break was in progress. The entire family went on a trip to Chennai. Amit's sisters were excited to be at the Marina Beach and visit scores of places such as Mamallapuram. All six members of the family arrived at Chennai late in the evening on December 17 and stayed in two adjacent rooms of a hotel.

Amit was delighted to find a television in the hotel room. The



Test series between India and South Africa was to start on December 18, and he could not believe his stroke of luck—he would finally get to watch a cricket match on television the next day!

The night of December 17 passed. The morning of December 18 came. "We will first visit the Marina beach since it is near our hotel. Then, we will hire a taxi for Mamallapuram," Amit's father announced during breakfast.

"I will stay in the hotel," said Amit to the shock and disappointment of his family.

"Why?" they questioned him.

"I am waiting for 01:30 p.m. A Test match will begin in Johannesburg."

"So what?"

"I will watch it on television in the hotel room."

One by one, each of his family members stressed on the importance of a vacation. His sisters worried about the non-fruition of their holiday plans. Amit's father was

irritated, but he didn't show any emotion in response to the uncomfortable remarks from his favourite child.

"I will stay with Amit in the hotel room. Your mother and *Bua* will take you to the beach and other places," Amit's father told his daughters.

The breakfast was light but Amit's father's heart was heavy. The match started in the afternoon. Amit's eyes were glued to the television screen while his father sat silently in the room.

Amit's father broke his silence when drinks were taken by the players during the break and numerous advertisements followed on the television.

World's Smallest Park

Parks have plenty of green open spaces and nice bench to sit on and enjoy the view. But there is a new record of parks which are much smaller. The park in Nagaizumi, just over an hour from Tokyo, Japan, has been officially named the world's smallest park. It is located a stroll away from Nagaizumi Town Hall which is around a residential area. The park takes up just two and a half feet of space (or 0.24 square metres). This is equivalent to two sheets of A3 paper. The park

"You won't get a beach in Delhi. You won't get to see these amazing monuments in Delhi. Why are you wasting a vacation for just another cricket match?"

"I am making the most of this vacation."

"Really? By sitting in your hotel room and watching television?"

"I won't be able to watch any cricket match on television after returning home. My vacation lies in watching the match on TV."

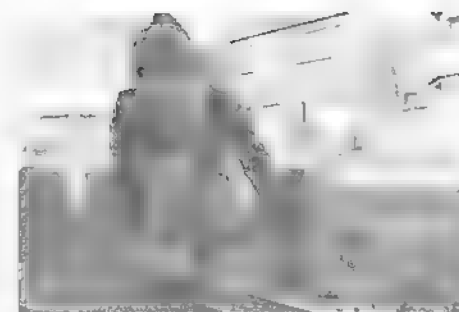
The television commentator's voice loudened as the captain of the batting team was clean bowled off a googly on the first ball after the drinks break.

features an entrance, a small bench, and some grass.

It was created in 1988 to make best use of free space on the road. Someone went to the US, and found the previous record holder for the smallest park at Mill Ends Park in Portland, Oregon. So, they wanted to create an even smaller park.

Because of its size, the park is often picked up by the media. Otherwise, the park is used by locals as a place to relax, as well as by tourists for taking photos.

However, the town wanted to make this park officially the world's smallest. In order to do this, they brought in a professional surveyor to measure the exact area of the park and gathered additional information as required by GWR (*Guinness World Records*) guidelines.



A True Story

Retired Wing Commander Ashok Ketkar was on a trip to Delhi from Mumbai. While serving in the Air Force, Ashok had survived a plane crash but lost both his legs. A veteran of two wars, once soaring through the skies, he was now permanently bound to a wheelchair. However, every year, he travelled to Delhi to meet his old colleagues near India Gate for Republic Day celebrations, a tradition he had followed for years.

Yet, for the past few years, travelling to Delhi had become emotionally painful. His colleagues' children had respectable careers, many serving in the military or Air Force. In contrast, Ashok's only daughter, Bhargavi, had abandoned her studies in her second year of college to marry a man whose terminally ill mother wished to see his wedding before she passed

away. Despite Ashok and his wife's strong objections, Bhargavi went ahead with the marriage, making Ashok cut off ties with her. It had been five years since the incident had happened.

After completing the formalities, Ashok was escorted to the front row in the aircraft. As the plane taxied to the runway, he looked outside and reminisced about his flying days. Overcome with emotion, his hands instinctively mimicked gripping a joystick. Tears streamed down his face.

Once the plane stabilised in the sky, Ashok asked for water. A little boy approached him with a glass, surprising him. Just then, an announcement played over the speakers.

"Dear passengers, welcome aboard Flight 6E 6028. Today, we have a very special guest—Retired

Wing Commander Ashok Ketkar, seated in 1A. He heroically served India in two wars and played a crucial role in securing victories. Despite losing both legs in an accident, his fighter spirit remains unshaken. When his daughter married against his wishes, he severed ties with her. But a daughter never forgets her father... After losing her mother-in-law shortly after marriage, she resumed her studies, graduated with top marks, and pursued a prestigious career. Today, despite going against her father's wishes in marriage, she has fulfilled his dream for her career."

Ashok was stunned. The passengers listened intently.

"Baba, you always wanted to see me become a pilot. That was your dream. Well, your dream has come true. This flight is being piloted by none other than your Bhargavi—

the very daughter you are angry with. And the little boy who gave you water is my son, Aditya—your grandson."

Ashok was overwhelmed with shock and joy. His tear-filled eyes looked at the boy, who smiled back. He picked Aditya up and hugged him tightly. Meanwhile, Bhargavi, holding a mic, walked towards him, tears streaming down her face.

She stood at attention and saluted. The entire flight crew and passengers joined in. Then, she sat beside Ashok and hugged him, sobbing. Aditya said that he wanted to be a fighter pilot like his grandfather and serve the country.

As the plane descended, the golden sunset bathed three generations of pilots—one past, one present, and one future—in its warm glow. Though the plane was landing, Ashok Ketkar's life had just taken off once again.

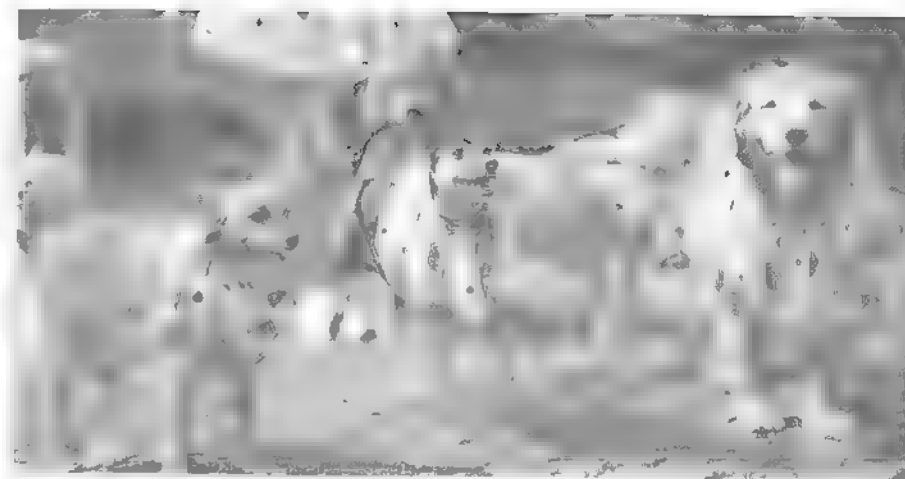
Rio Carnival Parade of Dogs

Several hundred mud-covered carnival revellers paraded in the seaside town of Paraty in south-eastern Brazil recently, a decades-old tradition that has grown larger since it started 40 years ago.

Many of the street parties feature musicians playing large,

heavy instruments. For almost two decades, hundreds of dogs in the upscale Barra da Tijuca region in Rio de Janeiro have wagged their tails to samba music at the Blocao Carnival street party.

About 300 people brought their pets dressed in costumes, ranging



from superheroes to cartoon characters and clowns. And then the dogs socialised under the shadow. The name Blocao is a mixture of *bloco*, which means 'carnival street party', and *cao*, meaning 'dog' in Portuguese.

This year, the percussionists, wind instrumentalists and stilt performers were paying homage to Rita Lee, a Brazilian singer and songwriter who died in 2023. A puppet of Rita Lee had a red guitar which said 'without amnesty'.

One of the popular early-morning street parties is 'Friends of the Jaguar', on a beach looking across the water at Rio de Janeiro's Sugarloaf Mountain. Thousands of revellers attend, all decked out in leopard- and jaguar-print clothing.

The party features a band of saxophones, trombones and drums

trailed by a truckload of speakers. And the choreographed dancers, 'the jaguaresses', crawl about and paw playfully like large felines, with elaborate make-up to match.

A Samba school, Academicos do Tatuape presented its parade about social injustice and the fight for equal rights, inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. The group's theme for the year is a famous quote: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Rio de Janeiro's mayor opened King Momo's symbolic five-day reign over the festivities. King Momo or King Momos is considered the king of Carnivals in numerous Latin American festivities. His appearance signifies the beginning of the Carnival festivities. Each carnival has its own King Momo. His tenure is

symbolic of society being turned upside down during the Carnival. His role is inspired by Greek

mythology. Momos is the personification of satire, mockery and irreverence.

Science is Ubiquitous

Science is everywhere, even in the simplest things we do. Without realising it, we interact with brilliant scientific principles daily.

Science isn't just in textbooks—it's in your hands, in your kitchen, and even on your skin!

Soap is more than a bar; it's a microscopic cleaning force. Each soap molecule has two ends—one that loves water (hydrophilic) and another that loves grease but repels water (hydrophobic). When you wash your hands, the hydrophobic ends grab onto grease and dirt, while the hydrophilic ends pull them into the water, breaking them apart and washing them away.

Your fridge doesn't create cold—it removes heat! This happens

through a special liquid called a refrigerant. Inside the fridge, the refrigerant absorbs heat and turns it into a gas, cooling the interior. Then, the gas is compressed and sent to the condenser coils at the back, where it releases the heat and turns back into a liquid. This cycle repeats, keeping your food fresh and your drinks chilled.

Without soap's chemistry, hygiene and health would take a hit, increasing the spread of diseases. Refrigeration revolutionised food storage, reducing waste and making fresh food accessible. The sensors and AI in smartphones have redefined how we communicate, learn, and navigate. Everything is related to science!

(Compiled by Dr. Veena Adige)

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"Our greatest glory is not in never falling!
But in rising everytime we fall!!"

- Oliver Goldsmith



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SWADHYAYA
Valmiki Ramayana

(Uttarakanda, Canto 98)



देवपुत्रा ऋषिसुता गन्धर्वाणां सुतास्तथा ।
रामक्षयं विदित्वा ते सर्व एव समागताः ॥१८॥
devaputraa rishisutaa gandharvaanaam sutaastathaa
raamakshayam veditvaa te sarva eva samaagataah.

Knowing the (nearing) end of the life-journey of Ramachandra, the sons of gods, sages and gandharvas came there.

ते राममभिवाद्याहुः सर्व एव समागताः ।
तवानुगमने राजन् सम्प्राप्ताः स्म महायशः ॥१९॥

te raamamabhivaadyaahuh sarva eva samaagataah
tavaanugamane raajan sampraaptaah sma mahaayashah.

All those who came there saluted Ramachandra, and said, 'O highly glorious one! We have come to follow you.'

यदि राम विनास्माभिर्गच्छेस्त्वं पुरुषर्षभ ।
यमदण्डमिवोद्यम्य त्वया स्म विनिपातिताः ॥२०॥

yadi raama vinaasmaabhirgachchhestvam purusharshabha
yamadandamivodyamya tvayaa sma vinipaatitaah.

O Ramachandra, the best among men! If you will go (to heaven) without us, then we will consider ourselves as if killed by you with the rod of Yama (the god of death).

एवं तेषां वचः श्रुत्वा ऋक्षवानररक्षसाम् ।
विभीषणमथोवाच मधुरं श्लक्ष्णया गिरा ॥२१॥

evam teshaam vachah shrutvaa rikshavaanararakshasaam
vibheeshanamathovaacha madhuram shlakshnayaa giraa.

On hearing these words of all bears, monkeys, demons and others, Ramachandra spoke to Vibhishana, in smooth and sweet words.

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Narayaneeyam



TCG Namboodiri's write-up on Srimad Narayaneeyam (*BJ* February 16-28, 2025) has been an epitome of Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri's deep and unwavering devotion to Lord Guruvayurappan.

I have grown up by hearing the chanting of certain portions of Narayaneeyam by my late mother in the early morning hours with utmost devotion.

Interestingly, Carnatic musician Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagawathar, an ardent devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan, used to conclude his '*kacheris*' by singing a couple of lines from Narayaneeyam set to Ragamalika.

—**Kelath Gopakumar Menon,**
Thrissur

Illuminating Article

Dr. T. S. Muraleedharan's illuminating article on Dr. M. S. Valiathan made for an engaging read (*BJ* February 1-15, 2025). It is rare to find medical professionals who excel as surgeons, inventors, and administrators, while also taking a keen interest in Ayurveda. Dr. Valiathan's contributions in translating the ancient texts of Charaka and Sushruta, along with his leadership in spearheading fundamental research in Ayurveda, represent pioneering steps towards integrating Western medicine with traditional Ayurvedic healing practices.

—**Subba Rao, Mumbai**

Wonderful Reading

The reading material of *BJ* issue dated March 1-15, 2025, is wonderful. It tackled a range of topics such as the ancient wisdom of women patriots, insights into biodiversity in animals and birds, and explanations of ancient data by specialists.

—**Prof. (Dr.) B. L. Puttoo,**
Hyderabad

Insightful Article

The article on Dr. M. S. Valiathan by Dr. T. S. Muraleedharan in *Bhavan's Journal* (February 1-15, 2025) was highly insightful. It is a timely tribute to the legendary physician in the field of modern medicine and Ayurveda, and an elaborate study on the rich legacy he left behind. His amazing professional journey is detailed in a profound way by Dr. Muraleedharan. The writer provides a spectrum of Dr. Valiathan's achievements as a scholar, researcher, writer and innovator in different contexts.

It is highly motivating to know that Dr. Valiathan became an ardent devotee of Ayurveda. Dr. Valiathan was blessed with a 'beginner's mind' in 'learning'. His books, including *The Legacy of Charaka* and *An Introduction to Ayurveda*, highlighted Ayurveda's potential in healthcare. Along with that, he had the utmost humility to accept a guru at the age of 65 and learn Ayurveda under him. He was a genius by himself. Apart from that,

he was hard-working and displayed an eagerness to learn.

An immense thanks to Dr. Muraleedharan and of course, to *Bhavan's Journal* for helping us to visualise Dr. Valiathan on a broader canvas.

—**Mrs. Sathyavathi, Kerala**

Lesson to Women

This is with reference to the article on Gangu Subbayya published in *BJ* March 1-15, 2025.

Though born to a rich family, the married life of Gangu Subbayya had been a total failure and the article vividly narrates the conviction and buoyancy with which she fought over and made her life a meaningful one by helping the poor and the needy.

It is not only a lesson to all women but to the entire human race. For many of us life is not a bed of roses but a series of adjustments throughout. The article was heartrending.

—**V. Dhanasekharan,**
Puducherry

SWEET THOUGHT

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"In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure."

- Bill Cosby



Central Bhavan, Mumbai

Celebration of 87th Foundation Day of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's 87th Foundation Day was celebrated on November 7, 2024. On this occasion, the Parayana of Rudradhyaya and other hymns was performed by Dr. S.G. Mishra, Additional Examination Secretary, Bhavan's Higher Sanskrit Exams. Dept., and Dr. Hitesh Trivedi, Asst. Director, Bhavan's P.G. and Research Dept.

A lecture (in Marathi) on 'Vedic Foundation of Indian Cultural Heritage' was delivered online by Prof. Dr. Ravindra Muley, Former Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune. In his enchanting



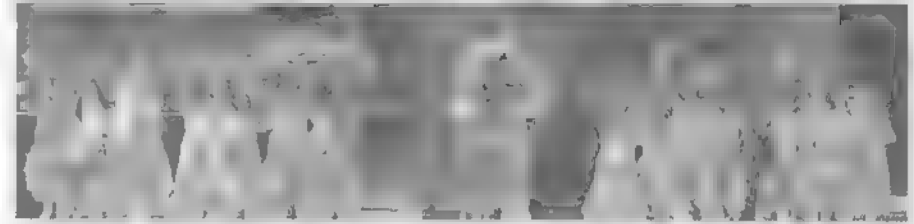
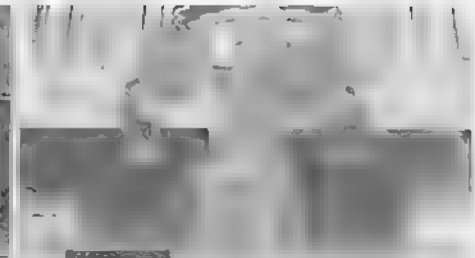
lecture, Prof. Dr. Ravindra Muley discussed the various aspects of the Vedic basis of Indian cultural heritage.

Kolkata Kendra

Annual Day Celebration

Bhavan's Gangabux Kanoria Vidyamandir (BGKV), Primary Section, Kolkata, celebrated its Annual Day on November 29, 2024,

at the Science City Auditorium. The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Dr. Bikram Sarkar, IAS (retd.), Chairman and



Shri Raj Kumar Chajjer, Vice Chairman of Kolkata Kendra. The theme of the Annual Day was 'ऐक्य मेव जयते' i.e., 'Long Live Unity'.

The academic awards were then given away to the achievers, recognising their hard work and

dedication. The cultural programme was a vibrant showcase of diversity, featuring dances, drama and other performances. The grand finale was a spectacular presentation of Unity in Diversity, celebrating the rich cultural heritage of our nation.

Excellence in AISSE Examination

The extraordinary performances of a few students of BGKV in the subject of Hindi (2nd Language) in the AISSE examination 2024 have been recognised by the Madhuban Publication. The publication house awarded Anushka Harsh (scoring 96%), Rishi Singh, and Akshara Maherotra (scoring 95%) medals and appreciation certificates.



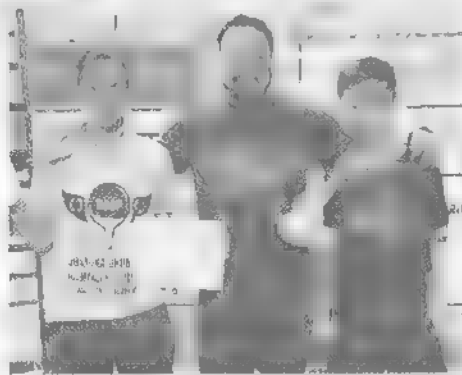
International Karate Championship



Manaswini Ghoshal of Std. 7 of BGKV won gold medal in Kata and bronze in Kumite at the 20th WKI International Karate Championship 2024, held in Vadodara.

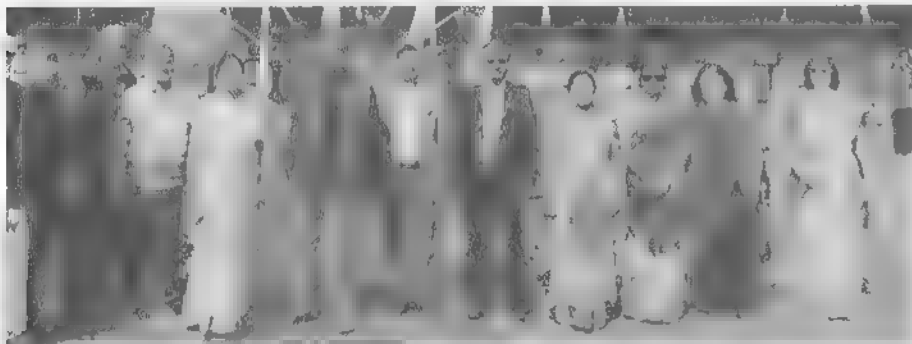
Table Tennis Championship

Arushi Nandi of Std. 8 secured the 2nd position in under 15 girls' singles in the UTT National Ranking Table Tennis Championship 2024, held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, from December 5 to 12, 2024.



Annual Sports 2024

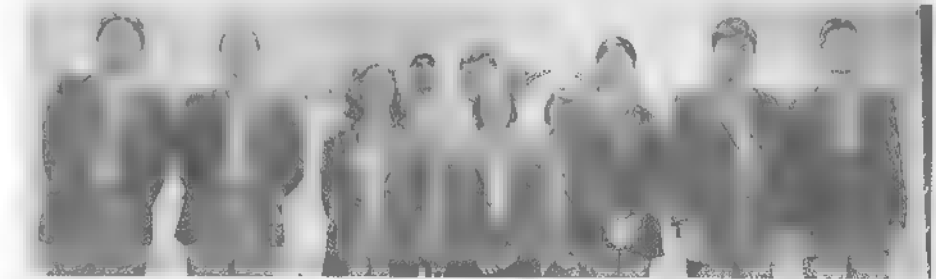
The secondary wing of Bhavan's Gangabux Kanoria Vidyamandir organised their Annual Sports Meet 2024 on December 20, 2024. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar, renowned Indian athlete and Padma Shri awardee; and Shri. Somnath



Dutta, district physical education officer, Youth Welfare, North 24 Parganas, graced the event with their presence. The enthusiasm and excitement of students and parents made the sunny day even more

bright and cheerful. Finally, winners of different track events were declared and prizes were distributed by the dignitaries. The day concluded with the retreating march.

Excellence in Sports



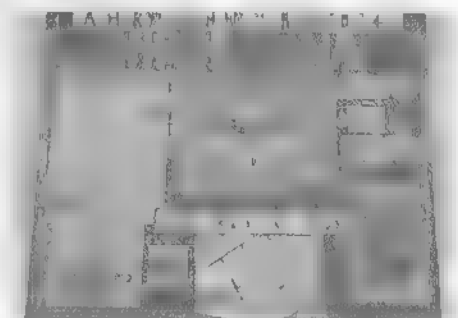
On December 14, 2024, a few students of BGKV were felicitated by the 2nd International Sports Film Festival committee at Unnayan Bhavan, Kolkata auditorium, for excellent performance in sports. The students are Sunishka Dutta for

Gymnastics; Anushka Harsh, Deepshikha Das and Anushka Bose for Shooting; Sandipta Patra and Akshit Pandey for Cricket; Aarushi Nandi and Indira Sen for Table Tennis; Anushka Roy for Karate and Venkatesh Das for Chess.

Rashtriya Poshan Maah 2024

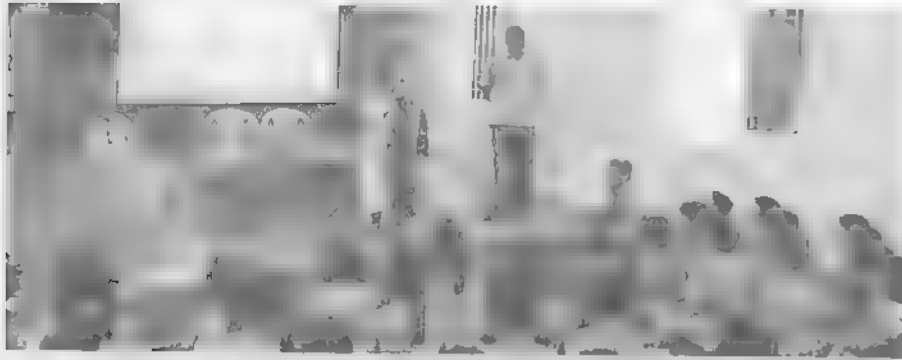
As part of Rastriya Poshan Maah 2024, the students of the Nutrition Department engaged in various activities to promote awareness about this year's themes: 'Shree-Anna: Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi' and 'Sahi Poshan Desh Roshan'. Creative projects were undertaken to decorate the news board with relevant information. A group discussion was conducted,

highlighting the importance of planning a balanced diet for overall health.



Coimbatore Kendra

Awareness Programme



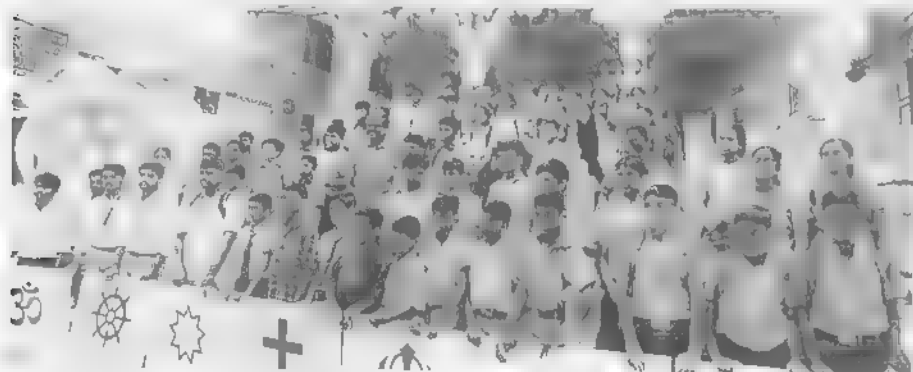
The students of Std. 6 attended an awareness programme on “Child Abuse” conducted by Shanthi Ashram, Coimbatore, on November

26, 2024. The programme aimed to address critical issues related to safeguarding children from various societal threats.

Journey for Unity

The Journey for Unity, a programme co-ordinated by Shanthi Ashram, as part of Kovai Vizha, was undertaken on November 26, 2024. Eight students of Std. 8 participated in the programme. The journey of unity began at the

Koniyamman Temple and ended with a grand finale at MGM, after visiting various religious temples. The spiritual leaders of the five places of worship addressed the students and spoke about their religious practices, code of

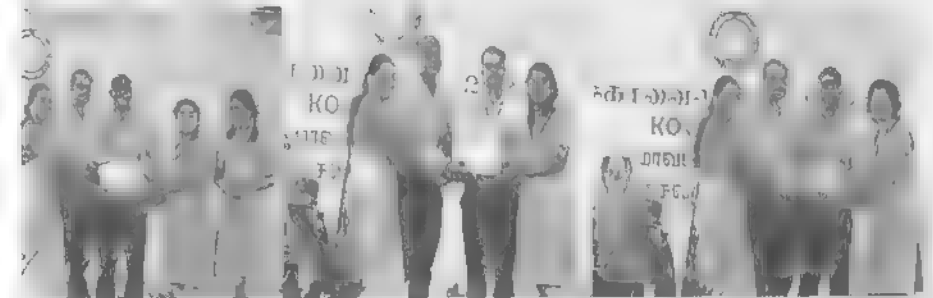


conduct and the core values of each religion

The day was well spent knowing our cultural heritage, inculcating

among the students the values of respect and responsibility to work together for a peaceful and united India.

Inter School Quiz Competition



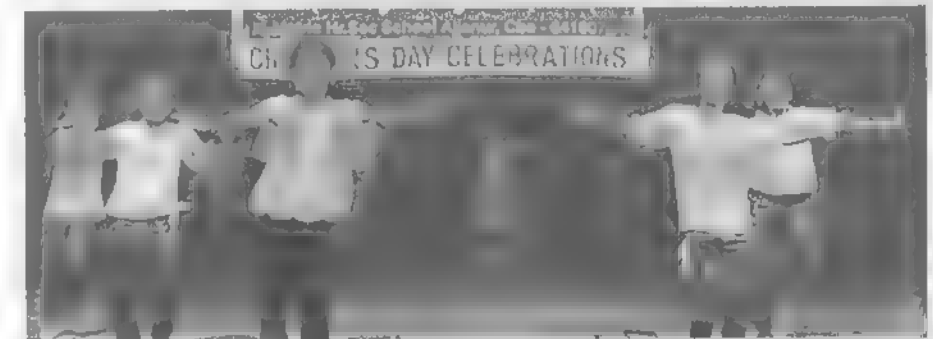
The Indian Postal Department conducted the District Level Inter School Quiz Competition—KOVAIPEX 2024—on November 13, 2024, at Suguna Hall, Coimbatore. In the Preliminary Round, 24 Schools participated,

out of which 6 Schools were selected for the Finals. Our school was one among the Six Schools and students of Std. 11—Dhanya Sri, Janushiya and Yuthika Sundari—won the First Place in the finals.

Children's Day Celebration

Children's day was celebrated on November 14, 2024. A vibrant and enchanting dance was

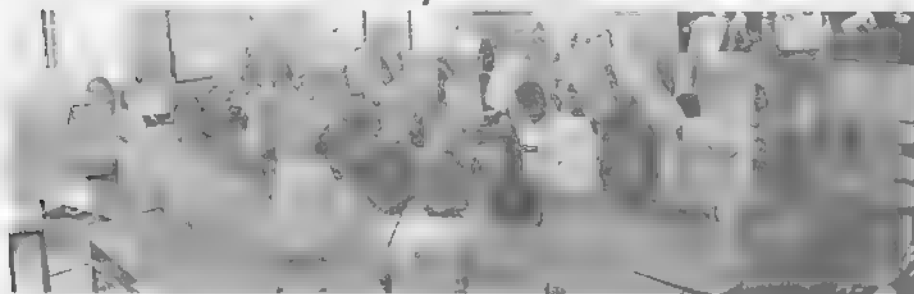
presented by the primary children followed by a power-packed performance by the teachers which



included speech, recitation of poems, riddles, jokes, singing and dancing. A special performance was

given by the principal to cheer the children and spread joy among students.

Pink Day Celebration



The primary students celebrated Pink Day on November 14, 2024. The children participated in a variety of hands-on activities

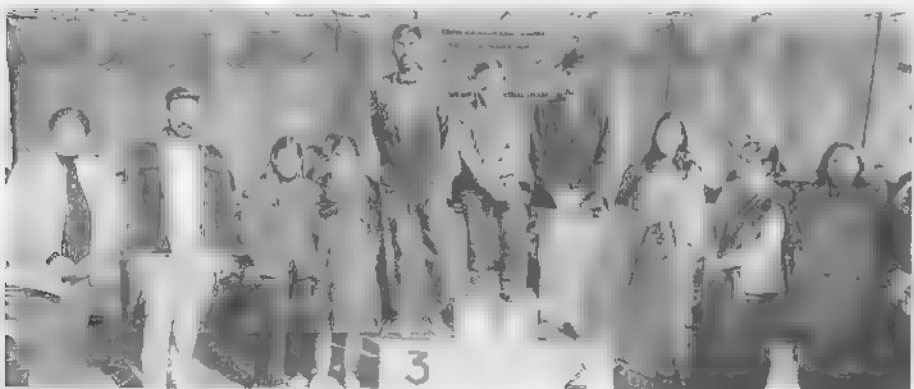
which was related to the colour pink. A pink-themed photo booth was set up, capturing memories of the joyful day.

Chandigarh Keno

Panjab University Sports Meet

BVC's Special Cell athletes participated in the Sports Meet organised by the Centre for Human Rights and Duties, Panjab University, wherein Kuwarjeet

Singh won a Silver Medal in Standing Long Jump and a Bronze Medal in the 100m race, while Harsimran Kaur secured a Bronze Medal in the 25m walk.



Skater Champion



Kanav Bansal, an outstanding skater from the Special Cell bagged a Bronze medal at the 62nd National Roller Skating Championship 2024-25 held at Mysore.

National Children's Science Congress

Ms. Sreeja Chattopadhyay, a student of Std. 10, qualified for the prestigious 31st National Children's Science Congress 2024. Her project,



titled 'Study of the Nutritional Status among the District Sub-Population in the Chandigarh-Mohali Region', was presented during the Chandigarh State Children's Science Congress and stood out for its innovative and in-depth analysis.

Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan



Dhruv Sachdev of Std. 8, secured the 1st Rank at Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan 2024 State Level Camp, held in Chandigarh on December 8, 2024. He has progressed to the National Level, showcasing his exceptional talent and dedication.

Christmas Celebrations

Bhavan Vidyalaya, New Chandigarh, welcomed the festive season with a heart-warming celebration on December 23, 2024, that brought everyone together in a spirit of joy, creativity, and the true essence of Christmas. The celebrations included a melodious medley of Christmas Carols, and a vibrant dance performance. The pre-primary section was abuzz with excitement as Santa Claus made a special visit to classrooms, spreading cheer and delight among the little ones.



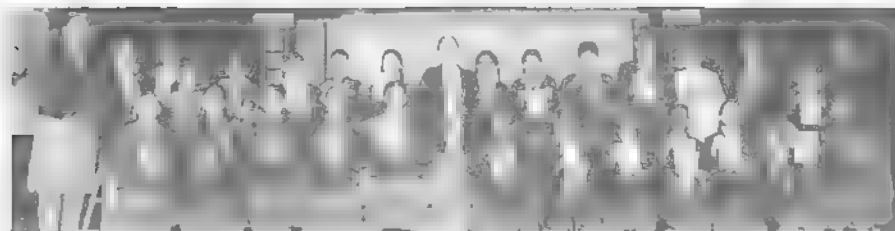
Panchkula Kendra

Shri Kulwant Singh Literary Fest

Bhavan Vidyalaya Panchkula hosted its third Kulwant Singh Literary Fest 2024 on December 20 and 21, 2024, which unfolded as a vibrant symphony of literature, art and culture, weaving together stories, ideas and creativity into an unforgettable tapestry of inspiration and imagination.

The fest featured a series of thought-provoking sessions, workshops and a book fair. The fest began with the keynote address by

Ms. Rajni Sekhri Sibal, IAS (Retd.) Another key highlight was 'Drishtikon: Snapshots and Scripts', a discussion featuring the author couple Mr. Ashok and Ms. Novel Lavasa in conversation with Dr. Jyoti Singh. Adding to the intellectual vigour of the fest, TEDx speaker and Former IAS officer Mr. Vivek Atray presented an engaging session on the 'Power of Eloquence', focusing on the art of public speaking. The event also



highlighted 'Glimpses of Literary Treasures' and the release of *Abhivyakti*, an e-treasure of creative expressions. The Book Fair by Scholastic added special grace to the event.

The fest brought forward sustainable themes like 'Magic of Millets: The Future on Our Plate' through a master class by Master Chef Vikas Chawla. A session titled 'Josh, Jazba and Junoon: Tribute to Kargil War Heroes and their Saga of Valour' honoured Kargil War Heroes with General Ved Prakash Malik, PVSM and AVSM; Capt. Yogendra Singh Yadav, PVC, and Col. Balwan Singh Panghal, MVC, in conversation with Col. D.S. Cheema. Other riveting sessions included 'Colours of Life: I Did It My Way',

featuring Manmohan Sarin in conversation with Roopinder Singh, 'Safarnaama' with Vijai Vardhan, and 'Tum Baat To Karte' by Vineet KKN 'Panchhi'. The outstanding works of Bhavan's young authors through the BriBooks platform were also appreciated. Dr. Pawan Sudhir, Retd. Professor and Head, Department of Education in Arts and Aesthetics, NCERT, conducted an insightful workshop on integrating art as a medium of literary expression. The other key workshops included Storytelling, Acting and Theatre, Photography and Creative Writing. Additionally, sessions on Calligraphy, Puppet-making, Caricature Art, Slate and Kalam Making, and 'From Thought to Writing' were conducted.

Synergy 2024 Celebration

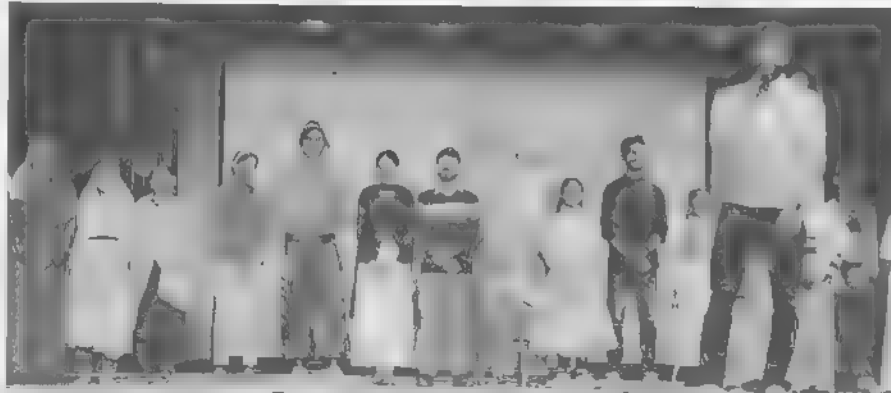
From November 26 to December 13, 2024, Bhavan Vidyalaya, Panchkula, conducted Synergy 2024, a unique parents school connect programme designed for Nursery, LKG and UKG students. This



innovative initiative redefined traditional learning by creating a dynamic environment where

children were hosting a journey of learning for their parents.

Christmas Celebrations



Bhavan Vidyalaya Panchkula celebrated Christmas with great enthusiasm and a festive spirit. The Inter-Collegiate Prayer Fellowship (ICPF) organised a three-day Spiritual Awakening Programme for the students, making the occasion both meaningful and memorable.

Pastor Cherian and Pastor Babu James, along with their team, presented a heart-warming cultural programme that emphasised the true essence of Christmas and the reasons behind its celebration. Their performances inspired the students, spreading the message of love, kindness and hope.

Wadakkanchery Kendra

SARANG 2024

The school's 22nd Annual Day, 'SARANG 2024', was held on December 13, 2024, with great enthusiasm and fervour. The event showcased the students' diverse talents through a range of cultural programmes.

Dr. Gayathri Sreekumar, a distinguished guest, and Shri. P N Rajan, Honourable School Chairman, graced the occasion with their presence. The Annual Prize Distribution ceremony recognised and rewarded

students for their outstanding achievements in academics and co-curricular activities. The event was a grand success, celebrating

the school's accomplishments and providing a platform for students to demonstrate their skills and creativity.

Chennai Kendra

Annual Margazhi Music Festival – 2024



Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra, organises Annual Margazhi Music Festival of Music and Dance series every year between November and January. Thiru R.N. Ravi, Honourable Governor of Tamil Nadu, was the Chief Guest who inaugurated the festival on November 22, 2024. On the same evening was the Harikatha by Smt. Vishakha Hari. The highlight of this year's Musical series were performances by renowned artistes Dr. Sudha

Ragunathan, Sri Sid Sriram, Vidwan Vijay Siva, Sri Abhishek Raghuram, Sri Sandeep Narayanan, Sri Haricharan, the Violin duo Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi, Kalaimamani A Kanyakumari, and Veena Vidwan Sri Rajesh Vaidhya to name a few. The festival featured discourses by Sri Dushyant Sridhar, Ms Sivasriskanda Prasad and thematic presentations by Ghatam Karthik, Thiruvannur Dr Bakthavathsalam, Smt. Subhasree Thanikachalam and Smt. Charulatha Mani.

Kamba Ramayana Book Released



On March 5, 2025, the Bhavan's publication *Kamba Ramayana: A Study* was released by the Tamil Nadu Governor R. N. Ravi at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore, Chennai.

New Delhi Kendra

The 66th Annual Day and Prize Distribution

Bhavan's Mehta Vidyalaya celebrated its 66th Annual Day on November 18, 2024. The event was graced by Shri Banwarilal Purohit, Chairman of Delhi Kendra, Vice President of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan as Chief Guest, and Shri C.S. Vaidyanathan, Chairman, SMC, Mehta Vidyalaya, as Guest of Honour. The school magazine 'Bhavidya' was released by Shri Banwarilal Purohit.

Teachers who achieved 100 per cent results in their respective subjects in 2024 Board Exams were honoured, while meritorious students were awarded trophies, certificates and cash prizes in different categories.

The cultural highlight, 'Bharat Shining: Echoes of Excellence and Environmental Stewardship', showcased a captivating dance-drama inspired by Dr. K.M. Munshi's vision of harmony with nature and Bhavan's philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* ("The world is one family"). Collaborating with Rahul Khanna's Education through Theatre, the programme blended music, dance and storytelling, showcasing brilliant choreography, to emphasise Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a shared commitment towards a sustainable future. As a proactive step towards addressing climate



change, the grand finale featured an inspiring gesture where participants distributed 100

saplings to the audience, with a heartfelt appeal to promote tree plantation.

Jaipur Kendra

CBSE National Level Science Exhibition

Bhavan Vidyashram, K. M. Munshi Marg, Jaipur, hosted CBSE Regional Level Science Exhibition for Ajmer Region on November 11 and 12, 2024.

The Chief Guest of the programme was Dr Narayan Prasad Padhy, Director, MNIT,

Jaipur, who appreciated the efforts and enthusiasm of the participants from 70 schools across Ajmer Region, displaying more than 100 innovative projects on various themes, including Waste Management, Resource Management, Organic Farming, Food, Health and



Sanitation, Transport and Communication.

Two science projects of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Vidyashram, K.M. Munshi Marg, Jaipur, have been selected for CBSE National Level Science Exhibition. The projects are: (1) 'Urban AI Grown Microgreens: A Natural Lifeline for Chronic and

Malnourished People' in the Senior Category (Std. 9 to 11), showcased by a team comprising Reet Makhija and Nehal Grover, and (2) 'Hydroponic Plantation using AIoT in Urban Areas' in the Junior Category (Std. 6 to 8), showcased by a team comprising Raghav Sharma and Aarav Sethi.

Futurepreneurs' Challenge

The first-ever Futurepreneurs' Challenge hosted by Bhavan Vidyashram, K.M. Munshi Marg, Jaipur, in association with Vidyashram Old Student Association (VOSA), Innover and ACIC-VGU Foundation, on November 8, 2024, created a buzz in the entrepreneurial scene. The event brought together over 60 high school teams from across India. Students showcased innovative ideas across themes like sustainability and social impact

through pitch decks, exhibitions, and live pitching rounds. There were some show-stopping pitches and big wins.

The competition reached its climax with the 'top 10 teams presenting to a national investor panel', earning awards and seed funding. Standout projects like ShopIQ, HobbyFi, and Mediband reflected the bold vision of these young innovators. Alumni and industry mentors like Prashant Gupta and Alpesh Rawat brought



in their expertise, turning the event into a rich learning experience.

VOSA President, Shri Vivek Choudhary hailed it as a "milestone for shaping young innovators". By tackling real-world challenges, students

gained critical skills, confidence and resilience, proving that Gen Z is ready to lead the entrepreneurial world.

Award Highlights: Rs. 5,000; Winners: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Vidyashram.

Annual Function



BVB Vidyashram proudly organised its 40th Annual Function at Maharana Pratap Auditorium on November 23, 2024. The evening brimmed with culture, creativity and community spirit with the captivating theme, "Katha Kahin". Esteemed Chief Guest, Dr. Lalit K. Panwar (Retd. IAS), Vice Chancellor of Vivekanand Global University, Jaipur, graced the occasion.

One of the highlights of the evening was the skit of '4 Promises', performed by the talented students, transporting the audience to the

world of Rajasthan, showcasing the importance of local stories and the valuable life lessons they impart. The dynamic dance performances interspersed throughout the skit further enriched the experience.

As the event drew to a close, the audience was treated to a delightful music performance by the junior students. The Annual Function was not just a display of talent; it was a heartfelt celebration of the vibrant culture, traditions and festivals that define Rajasthan.

SAMBHAVYA Scholarship



The VOSA Batch of 1998 has introduced the SAMBHAVYA Scholarship, a noble initiative to support talented students from underprivileged backgrounds. This scholarship is designed to recognise and reward academic excellence among Std. 10 students. This year, Cherry Kaur of Std. 10 was

honoured with the prestigious scholarship of Rs. 25,000. Her exceptional dedication to academics and remarkable performance have made her a worthy recipient.

From the academic session of 2025-26 onwards, the SAMBHAVYA Scholarship will be Rs. 51,000/- per annum.

Bhimavaram Kendra

World Meditation Day

The United Nations General Assembly declared December 21 as World Meditation Day. BVB Vidyashram celebrated the first ever World Meditation Day to emphasise the significance of meditation for mental and physical well-being. The theme of this year is 'Inner Peace, Global Harmony!!' It is a global call to recognise the day by focusing on promoting mindfulness, peace and health. All

the students were seated in the *Sukhasana* posture and made to do meditation for 20 minutes. All the guests and the teachers also joined them. The chief guest of the day, Sri Bh. Achyutha Rama Raju, the vice chairman of the Vidyashram, addressed the gathering by highlighting the incredible benefits of meditation and how it can improve our mental and physical health.

Shraddhanjali

Shri Joginder Sanger

We regret to inform the passing away of a most remarkable human being, Shri Joginder Sanger on February 28, 2025. As a former Vice-Chairman and later Chairman of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London Kendra for decades, he steered the organisation to its present unique position as the flagship centre of Indian Arts and Culture in the U.K. As a businessman, starting with humble beginnings, he built a vast business empire.

Apart from being a great philanthropist to a variety of worthy causes, it is as a human being, a man of humility, truthfulness, decency and uprightness, that he will be remembered forever by scores of people whose hearts he touched, and whose pains he felt in helping and accommodating them, regardless of the business cost to him.

Sri Joginder Sanger joined The Bhavan, London, during the late 1970's and joined the Executive Committee during late 80's.

He was the one who started The Bhavan's annual Diwali



Banquet, which has been going on for over 32 years now, to raise funds for The Bhavan to meet its annual deficit.

He took over from Dalalji after Dalalji's retirement in 2011 and was the Chairman for 11+ years, assisted by Sri Shantoo Ruparell as its Joint Chairman. During his term as The Bhavan's Vice-Chairman and Chairman, The Bhavan reached new heights in the field of our art and culture. He sincerely believed that we should make our cultural education easily accessible to our children who are the future of our cultural movement.

Joginderji is survived by his wife Sunitaji, daughter Reema, son Girish, daughter-in-law Kanika and three grandchildren.

Shri V. U. Eradi

Shri V. U. Eradi, an esteemed member of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kozhikode Kendra (Kerala), passed away on February 22, 2025. A Retired Additional Secretary from the Union Ministry and a member of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Shri. V. U. Eradi had been an integral part of the Kozhikode Kendra since May 1, 2007, serving with great dedication as its Vice Chairman. His unwavering commitment to the Kozhikode Kendra remained evident until his final moments.

A distinguished member of the Indian Revenue Service since 1957, Shri Eradi held the position of Joint Secretary in the Revenue Department of the Ministry of Finance, where he spearheaded initiatives in International Taxation. His expertise played a pivotal role in numerous tax



negotiations between India and various countries. He was also a member of the United Nations' temporary group responsible for developing tax treaties between developed and developing nations and served on the Central Tax Body, where he influenced key tax policies and legislation. His contributions extended internationally, as he represented India in matters of trade and finance in countries such as the UK, West Germany and France.

His tireless efforts to instil the principles of Dharma, as outlined in the Bhagavad Gita, among students will always be remembered with deep respect and gratitude.

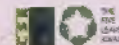
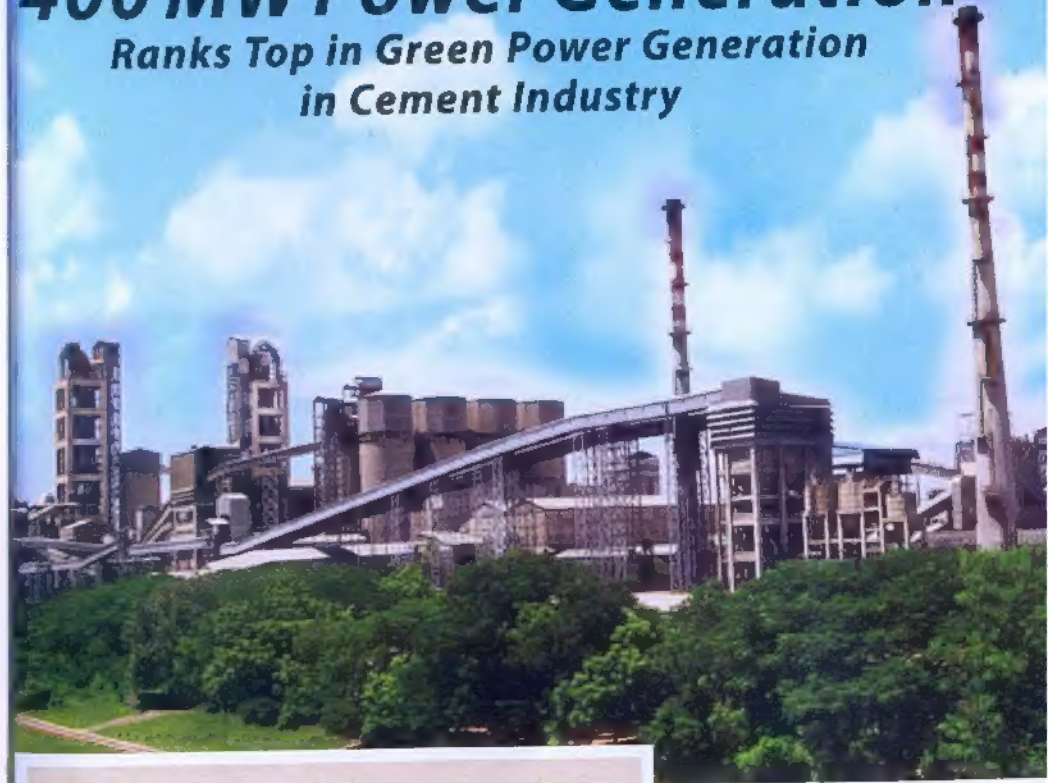
Shri Eradi is survived by his children Dr. Balagopalan Eradi and Aparna Rajesh. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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